

The Family Farm – Chapter 1

Don had taken a temporary job to earn extra cash. Dawn and he had debts and the extra funds helped them dig out. The 16-hour days would have been more than the average man could handle for very long. Newly married with no children, Don and Dawn Reynolds were trying to get established. Her parents hadn't covered all of the wedding expenses, hence the need for money. They wanted a home of their own; it was the American Dream, a chicken in every pot and a car in every garage. Except most people thought that the American Dream was everyone owning a home of their own and a garage with a car in it. Make that 2 cars, both Don and Dawn drove.

"How much have we saved?"

"Don, I'm banking my entire salary. Since we paid off the wedding, I've been banking the money from your second job, too. In the year since we got married, we've gotten out of debt and saved \$15,000."

"I don't know how much longer I can work 16-hours a day, Dawn. A conventional mortgage requires 20% down. At the moment, it would mean that we could only get a \$75,000 home."

"If you're willing to hang in until we get to \$25,000, I think we might get what we want."

"What do we want?"

"I was hoping you'd be interested in an older home. You recall how I talked about the farmhouse Uncle Ernest and Aunt Mary have? He's brought up the subject of retiring several times in the past year. I heard him tell Daddy that he intended to sell off the area with the buildings and rent the land to a neighbor."

"That's a nice old house. What is it, 10-miles from town?"

"About. There's a barn, hog house, chicken coop, corncrib, machine shed, well house, garage and the 3-story house."

"Do you know how much he wants for it?"

"\$100,000."

"Would he carry the paper?"

"I have no idea, but I really doubt it. Daddy said they didn't have much put away."

"Twenty thousand would get us a conventional mortgage, but there'd be closing costs, moving expenses and more than I can think of. I suppose we'd still need \$25 grand."

“Mother said that if we were close to having the money we needed, they’d help a little.”

“As much as I’d like to take your folks up on their offer, I think that we’d be better off keeping it in reserve. Let’s say we buy your uncle’s farmstead. What kind of improvements and repairs will we need to make? That old house isn’t insulated and has a coal furnace. Are you sure we want to get involved in rebuilding an old house?”

“We could do it one room at a time, Don. Pull the plaster, add insulation and put up sheetrock.”

“That house was built before they had electricity, what about that?”

“I’d imagine we’d have to rewire as we went.”

“How about the plumbing?”

“You’ve seen it, the tub is old but the plumbing was brought up to code according to Aunt Mary.”

“Up to code when?”

“When it was installed, during the early 1950s. If it were up to me, I’d get that old wood-stove out of the basement and put it back in the kitchen. The furnace was a wood furnace until he put in the stoker and started using coal. I sure you could either burn coal or wood. The basement has that wood room he uses as a coal room.”

“How does that stoker work?”

“My uncle fills the hopper once a day and it feeds the coal to the furnace.”

“Wouldn’t you rather have a modern furnace?”

“It would have to be LP fueled, coal is probably cheaper. Besides, you couldn’t burn wood in a LP stove.”

“You talk to your uncle. I’ll stay on the job until we have the \$25 grand. We’ll talk to your mom and dad, if we get in over our head and need help getting bailed out.”

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“How much is in the bank now?”

“\$30 thousand. Uncle Ernest and Aunt Mary found a home in town they like and come spring are moving to town.”

“What did he say about the farmstead?”

“We have first right of refusal. I picked up a loan application at the bank today.”

“Not to change the subject, but why aren’t you pregnant?”

“The doctor referred me to an OB-Gyn. I don’t know why, it’s isn’t from the want of trying, is it?”

“That’s for sure. Let’s get together with your aunt and uncle this weekend and make them an offer. Can you handle the loan papers?”

“I’ll have to, when would you have time?”

“True. Once we have some kind of an idea about how much money we’re going to need, I think I’ll give up the second job.”

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“We’ve run tests on the both of you and can’t identify a specific problem. I understand that you been working 2 jobs since shortly after you got married?”

“We had leftover wedding bills and wanted a down payment on a home, Doc. Dawn’s aunt and uncle sold us their home and I’ll be giving up the second job when we move down on the farm.”

“For the moment, I’d recommend you just keep trying. Once you are working shorter hours, things may change.”

“And if they don’t?”

“Dawn, there are many things we can do. Timing your cycles will be our first step. It will ensure the two of you have the best chance at getting you pregnant. This isn’t all that uncommon of a problem. You’re young; you have plenty of time to start a family.”

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“I didn’t realize how few furnishings we had.”

“I have everything we need for the kitchen and we have the bedroom suite. There is nothing wrong with the used furniture we picked up at Goodwill. Wait until we get the inside of the house finished. Then we’ll start buying new furniture.”

“Which room do you want to start in?”

“Let’s start at the top and work our way down. We can redo the upstairs bedrooms and then move our things to one we’ve refinished. Wow, a home of our own.”

“Ours’ and the banks. Why did you want to do a 30-year mortgage? We could have handled the payments on a 20-year mortgage.”

“We need the smaller payments to pay for the remodeling. Besides, you’re giving up your second job.”

“What’s for dinner?”

“Southern fried chicken, mashed potatoes and corn on the cob.”

“Sounds good, do you need help?”

“Not really. Why don’t you survey the upstairs and decide how you’re going to tackle the remodeling.”

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“Smells good. I think we’ll start in the NW bedroom. I don’t understand why Ernest and Mary had a 5 bedroom home, they never had any kids.”

“Grandpa built the house. They had 8 children. Ernest was the oldest and he got the farm. They didn’t have any kids because Mary had surgery. They talked about adopting, but never did.”

“I doubt we’ll fill 4 bedrooms ourselves, do you want a hobby room?”

“What were you thinking?”

“A hobby room for each of us. I can set up my computer, a desk and put my gun safe in one of the bedrooms. We can set up your sewing machine and the like in another. When we get the upstairs done, I’ll move our bedroom suite upstairs until the master bedroom is finished. After that, we’ll do the living room, dining room and finally the kitchen. I, crap...”

“I’ll get a candle and we’ll have a romantic candle lit dinner.”

“Does this happen often?”

“We’re 10-miles from town. My aunt said we’d have a power outage on the average once a month.”

“That’s why you have the block of ice in the freezer compartment?”

“She warned me that they could be out most of the night and suggested that I keep a block of ice in the freezer. As long as we don’t open it, it should stay cold until the power returns.”

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“Good morning, I made coffee.”

“Is the power back on?”

“Sometime during the night.”

“How much money did we have left over after we paid for everything?”

“\$12,500, why?”

“I was thinking about a standby generator. Several companies make residential standby units. You can get LP, natural gas and diesel powered units. We should get something big enough for all of the buildings. Are you interested?”

“Sure, what woman doesn’t like to shop?”

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“You want to power all of the buildings? How big of a service panel do you have?”

“200 amp.”

“What do you want to use for fuel?”

“How about diesel? We don’t have Propane or natural gas on the farm.”

“So you’d want 200 amps of single phase electricity? 120/240 volts?”

“Yes.”

“I recommend the Kohler 50REOZJB with the 4Q10W alternator. It burns from 1.5gph at 25% power to 4.2gph at 100% power. I have new and used.”

“How much is a new generator?”

“16,000.”

“Ouch. Used?”

"I have one with low hours for \$10,000. You're going to need an automatic transfer switch and will have to have the unit professionally installed. I'd recommend you put it on a slab, it weighs about 2,200 pounds."

"What does the transfer switch cost?"

"Will you be mounting it inside or outside?"

"Outside."

"The Koehler RDT 200 amp Automatic Transfer switch in the exterior enclosure with 24 circuits sells for about \$1,500. The One we got in with that generator is available for \$1,000."

"Are there any restrictions on the generator?"

"This isn't California, no. Will you need a diesel tank?"

"Not for now, there was a 1,000-gallon diesel and a 300-gallon gasoline tank on the farmstead when we bought it. What would the total run for the generator and the transfer switch?"

"\$11,000 plus \$687.50 sales tax, \$11,687.50."

"What about installation?"

"If you have the slab and it's near the fuel source, maybe \$500."

"What do you think, Dawn?"

"That's a lot of money Don. Do you feel like staying on your job another month so we have money to remodel?"

"I suppose I could. I can put in the slab myself and I know a fella who installs standby generators. It's up to you, but if we're voting, I say yes."

"We'll take it and arrange for our own installation. Do you deliver on Saturdays?"

"We could deliver it a week from today. You can take the transfer switch with you and maybe your friend can get it installed in the meantime."

"Where do you live?"

"Southwest of Fairfield. I'll have to draw you a map. How big of a slab will I need?"

"4'x8'."

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In case you haven't figured it out, Don and Dawn Reynolds lived in southeastern Iowa. Fairfield is east of Ottumwa about 25 miles. They lived in the general area of Libertyville. Don worked for Tractor Supply Company in Fairfield. Dawn worked for Jefferson County in Fairfield. Don's second job was in Fairfield, working for a Casey's General Store second shift. It wasn't a lot of money, but they didn't need it to live on. Dawn had very good benefits from Jefferson County and Don's had a health plan and insurance from TSC. He also got an employee discount. TSC sold the Generac residential systems, but those were out for 2 reasons, short life (3,600rpm, 3,000 hours engine life) and the need for propane. They bought the used generator in Ottumwa.

TSC had someone they regularly used to install the Generac systems. Don and he had been friends growing up and he figured Dave would install the system fairly cheaply; they had played softball together for a couple of years until Don quit to take the second job. Dave was also Don's best man.

"I bought the Kohler 50REOZJB with the 4Q10W alternator and the Kohler RDT 200 amp Automatic Transfer switch, Dave. Will it be a problem installing it?"

"Do you need help with the slab?"

"I'd appreciate it. If you could pick up the Quikrete, I'd appreciate it. I'll need enough for 11 ft³, get me 18 80 pound bags and I'll reimburse you."

"I can be there in an hour, mind if I bring Jeannie along?"

"Dawn would probably love to visit with her."

"Do you have 2x4s for forms?"

"There are a few in the machine shed, we can manage."

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"You have the forms in already? That didn't take you long. Jeannie went to the house to see Dawn."

"Can we mix it in this wheelbarrow?"

"I don't see why not. We can mix one bag at a time. We should be able to finish this up in 2-3 hours."

"Dawn suggested that you guys stay for dinner."

“Can she cook?”

“Like a chef.”

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“Oh, hi, Jeannie, how have you been?”

“Good. Nice house.”

“Let me show you around. We’ll start upstairs and see the entire place.”

“This room will be my sewing room and the one across the hall, Don’s den and office. We’ll use the other two bedrooms for kids, when we have them. The doctor said to just be patient. I think that once Don stops his second job, things will be different.”

“You’re planning on gutting the whole house?”

“Yes, the walls aren’t insulated. We’ll pull the plaster one room at a time, insulate, replace the wiring and put up 5/8” sheetrock. We’ll do the bedrooms first and then the bath. Isn’t that old tub the most awful thing you’ve ever seen?”

“Then what?”

“The master bedroom and master bath. After that, the living room, dining room and kitchen.”

“That’s a lot of work, it’s going to take you guys quite a while. Maybe Dave can help with the wiring.”

“I figured that Don would ask him.”

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“Do you have the transfer switch? I can install it on the side of the well house while you finishing off the concrete.”

“Inside of the well house. You should find whatever fasteners you need in the box.”

“Is this the main panel for the farm?”

“Yes it is. There is a smaller panel in the basement of the house, 100amps.”

“That’s good to know, I set it up to feed 100amps to the house and 100amps to the buildings. I understand from something that you said that you’re gutting the house and rewiring it?”

“I was planning on asking you about that, could you help me with the wiring?”

“I’ll do better than that, I’ll get you everything for free or cost.”

“We just need to bring it up to code.”

“Do you want help redoing the walls?”

“I hate to impose.”

“Hey, what are friends for? Do you have the materials?”

“Buying that generator set us back a little. It was closer to \$12 grand than \$11 grand. We only had about twelve-five in the bank so I’m going to work another month at Casey’s to get the money to buy materials. Any suggestions?”

“We should concentrate on stripping the walls, insulating and putting in the wiring. Then we could do all of the sheetrock at once. It will keep the mess down a little. I have quite an inventory of fixtures and wire and you can replace it as we use it.”

“Do you have any experience at plumbing? I have to replace the stools, tubs and sinks in both bathrooms.”

“What did you have in mind?”

“Full bath upstairs with a tub and a shower head. Full bath with separate shower for the master bath.”

“We can figure it out. Scotty can help if we have trouble, he’s a journeyman plumber.”

Scotty was Dave’s older brother. He lived in Ottumwa and had started as an apprentice plumber right out of high school. It had taken him 5 years to become a journeyman. Both men had been born and raised in Fairfield. Jeannie was also from Fairfield, but Scotty’s wife, Marilyn, was from Ottumwa. Scotty and Marilyn had 2 kids, Jeannie was pregnant with their first and Dawn had plans.

“Did you get the slab done?”

“The slab is done and the transfer switch hooked in. All Dave needs to do is wire in the generator. I thought we’d wait to run the fuel line from the tank to the generator until after the generator is installed and wired in.”

“When are they delivering it?”

“Next Saturday, Dave.”

“Jeannie and I will plan on coming by on Sunday afternoon after church and I’ll complete the hookup.”

“In that case, I’ll fix something nice for supper. You will stay for dinner won’t you?”

“That’s up to Jeannie.”

“We’ll stay if I can help.”

“What’s to help? I thought I just do a beef roast, potatoes and carrots.”

“Sounds good to me. I think we can stay for dinner Jeannie.”

“Let me bring something. How about a pie?”

“Chocolate?”

“If you want.”

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“You’re running a hose instead of a pipe?”

“I figured that a hose was safer, Dave. It’s easier to install, too. It’s double braided so it’s pretty strong.”

“What kind of wages does Casey’s pay?”

“Minimum wage, they always have high school kids lined up for the jobs and they don’t have to pay more than that. It’s only \$210 a week gross, but the extra \$800 a month really helps. Are you about done?”

“If the fuel line is hooked in, you can open the fuel valve and we’ll run the exerciser.”

“Open.”

The generator roared to life as Dave activated the exerciser. It was pretty loud because they didn’t have the residential muffler on it.”

“Let’s go to the house and get a cup of coffee. We should run the motor about 15 minutes.”

“Should I put on a different muffler?”

“Let’s see what it sounds like in the house.”

The Family Farm – Chapter 2

“Is it always going to be that loud, Don?”

“I can put on a residential muffler, Dawn.”

“I’ll call Scotty and have him pick one up. He can drop it off when he comes by to check out your plumbing. You did buy the generator in Ottumwa, didn’t you?”

“Yes. But I think maybe we ought to put in a weather enclosure with the critical sound enclosure. That will not only quiet it down, it will protect our investment.”

“You go ahead and talk to them yourself, Don. Scotty can deliver it if they have it in stock.”

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“I’d recommend the weather enclosure with the external critical silencer, Mr. Reynolds.”

“Do you have it in stock?”

“I do happen to have one, used.”

“Used is good. Can I come over on Saturday morning and pick it up?”

“I’ll hold it for you. I think we should replace the muffler, but that would raise the price a little.”

“The idea is to quiet the generator down, put one on.”

“Is the generator ok?”

“Works like a charm. We set it up to exercise on Sunday morning while we’re at church. I connected it to a 1,000-gallon diesel tank, what would you expect our run time to be?”

“Anywhere from 238 to 667 hours, depending on the load. Just short of a month on 25% power.”

“I was just curious. Most of our power outages are only a few hours. Once I finish remodeling our home, maybe I should think about a larger tank. Do you sell them?”

“I’m afraid we don’t. Do you have gas or diesel vehicles?”

“Gas. We also have a gas tank.”

"I had one customer who put in a 15,000-gallon service station tank but that was for a much larger generator and it was a corporation. Most people couldn't afford to fill a tank that size. What is the likelihood you'd ever need more than 1,000-gallons of diesel fuel?"

"Probably remote. It was just a thought. I'll see you on Saturday."

"Thanks, Mr. Reynolds."

"Did they have one?"

"Used if you can believe it. They probably bought the complete generator and dismantled it into pieces."

"I suppose we should have asked about it when we bought the generator."

"I did ask about the run times on the generator, Dawn. It would appear that that 1,000-gallon diesel tank would run us about a month."

"God help us if we have a month long power outage."

"I'm going to Ottumwa to pick up the weather enclosure Saturday morning. Want to ride along?"

"Sure. I can shop for groceries."

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"Sorry Dave, We're going to need to install the weather enclosure today."

"Hey, no problem. I brought some Romex and fixtures. We can store them until we need them. They were left over from a job I did so they're yours for free."

"I could use all the help I can get. I looked the enclosure over carefully and it was the enclosure the generator was originally mounted in. They had to drill an extra hole for something and the holes look like they line up perfectly."

"I think it's still a good deal, that engine doesn't seem to have many hours on it. It probably only ran when it was exercised. Some company probably had it to keep their office up."

"What did you bring us?"

"1,000' spool of 12/2 NM-B Romex, a 1,000' spool of 14/2 NM-B Romex, boxes, duplexes, plates and switches. We'll use the 12/2 for the outlets and 14/2 for the light fixtures. We'll need 10/2 for any 30 amp circuits you need to put in."

“That’s a lot of wire.”

“It might be enough to do most of the house. If it isn’t, there’s more where that came from. I usually add on a little extra when I bid a big contract to allow for mistakes. I buy the wire and fixtures up front and keep the leftovers for the occasional job for a friend. I think we can probably get the plaster off the walls and the enclosures installed before supper. Scotty was busy and said he’d come by next weekend to look at the plumbing.”

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“What a mess. I’ll have to leave it lie until next Saturday and haul it to the dump.”

“I’m free next Saturday; let me ask Jeannie if I can come by to help you haul it.”

“This was superb. Thanks, Dawn. Jeannie made that chocolate pie for dessert. Jeannie, can we come by next Saturday so I can help Don haul the plaster and trash to the dump?”

“You can, I have to go shopping.”

“Grocery shopping, Jeannie? I need to grocery shop too. How about I come in and shop with you while the guys haul the trash to the dump?”

“Sure, Dawn. How long do the two of you think it will take?”

“Most of the day, Jeannie. Probably two trips apiece.”

“How about I fix southern fried chicken for supper?”

“Sound good.”

“Hey man she fixed it last weekend. It’s absolutely great. I love Dawn’s southern fried chicken.”

“I’ll do desert again, want a cake?”

“Devil’s food with chocolate frosting?”

“Ok, but it’s going to make me fat.”

“What do you mean going to make you fat?”

“That’s the baby, Dave. I’ve watched my weight very carefully. You try having a baby and not gain a little.”

“If I had a baby, it would be more like a miracle, Jeannie.”

“You know what I mean. The doctor checks and he says I have very little extra fat on my body.”

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“She glows, doesn’t she?”

“That’s part of being pregnant. One of these days you’ll see.”

“How are we on money? Do we have enough I can buy the insulation?”

“You have my whole paycheck. It should be enough to do at least 2 of the rooms.”

“Enough for all 4? I’m not sure about the bathroom, it will depend on what Scotty can do to help us.”

“Big project, isn’t it?”

“We still have to buy the sheetrock, install it, tape it, and paint. Do you want plain or colors?”

“How about leaving them plain until we know what sex baby we’re having?”

“I’ll prime them and stop. What color do you want your sewing room?”

“Pale yellow.”

“I’m going to paint mine a pale green. Will that work?”

“We’ll match the paint so they do. Well...”

“Well what?”

“The sooner we get to it, the sooner we’ll have a baby of our own.”

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“Where did you find a dump truck?”

“Jack, from the softball team. He said we could use it all weekend and only had to replace the fuel. We can park it next to the house and toss the stuff out of the window. How do you want to handle this?”

“I figured we could start at the back and clean up each room as we went. I have the rolls of insulation and depending on how much time we have, we might install some of it.”

“Not until it’s wired. We do that today and wire the rooms tomorrow after church. Next Saturday, we can finish up the wiring and insulation and discuss the plumbing with Scotty.”

“I thought he was coming tomorrow.”

“He’s tied up again. His customer changed their mind on the plumbing fixtures they wanted. He told them that since they were already installed he couldn’t give them more than half of their money back. They told him they didn’t care so he’s pulling them out. There is a full bath, a $\frac{3}{4}$ bath and a kitchen.”

“What does he intend to do with the fixtures?”

“I suggested that he sell them to you. They’re new and have never been used. You could get them for $\frac{1}{2}$ of his cost.”

“Money is pretty tight right now.”

“I know what you mean, me too. If you can come up with the money, you can get all of your fixtures at fire sale prices.”

“Dawn and I have been keeping her folks in reserve in case something came up. I’ll have to talk to her first. If she agrees, we’ll see about borrowing the money from her folks.”

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“Half price?”

“That’s what Dave said.”

“I’ll call mom. Do you know how much?”

“I don’t have a clue, I’ll call Dave first.”

“You don’t have to do that, Don. Mom said they could loan us up to \$10,000.”

“I’d better call Scotty and get some idea, then.”

“Bath vanities \$380, tub ensemble, \$206, toilets \$310 each, shower \$249, kitchen sink \$277, bath faucets \$158, kitchen faucets \$218. Got it, Scotty. Is that our price or retail? Really? Thanks we take it all.”

“That sounded like an expensive telephone call.”

"It's not as bad as you think. $(2 \times \$380) + \$206 + (2 \times \$310) + \$249 + \$277 + (2 \times \$158) + \$219 = \$2,647 \times 30\% = \$794$. Those were the retail prices and his cost was 60% of retail. The items were already half paid for hence 30%."

"What about installation?"

"Scotty said he'd only charge us for materials and it would probably be under \$200."

"I'll call mom and tell her that we got all of the plumbing fixtures for \$1,000 installed."

"This is coming together faster than I thought. I'll keep working at Casey's until we have it paid for."

"Do you have to?"

"I don't want any more debt than our mortgage, Dawn."

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"Go ahead and start installing the insulation Don and I'll wire the previous room."

"You don't know how much I appreciate your help Dave; you've been a real lifesaver."

"We have a long way to go to get this house into shape. I thought you were planning on quitting your job at Casey's."

"I was but there is sheetrock, tape, paint, more insulation and Lord knows what else to buy. I don't want to get in debt and screw up my credit. We have to insulate the roof, too."

"What are you planning on doing when you get the house remodeled?"

"This is tornado country and I'm not comfortable with hiding from a tornado in the basement. I think maybe I'll see about putting in a storm shelter of some kind."

"A lot of lowans have survived tornados in their basements."

"Some didn't."

"We should be ready to start on the bathroom next weekend."

"I want to put up the sheetrock before we tear the bathroom apart."

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"Man, something smells good."

"I couldn't decide on a beef or pork roast so I baked both."

"I'm not feeling very well, Dave, I think you'd better get me to the hospital. I think maybe its labor cramps."

"We've got to go, same us some leftovers. Sorry."

"Were are you headed?"

"The Jefferson County Hospital."

"We'll eat and be there in a while."

"Make me up a big sandwich or two, it really smells good."

"Dave..."

"Got to go."

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"Did you make Dave a sandwich?"

"Two, a beef and a pork."

"This could be an all-night affair. Do you want to stick it out until she has the baby?"

"I think so; she'd do the same for me."

"Those roasts were very good, did you do something different?"

"I cooked them together in the same pan."

"You should feel free to do that again, they were very good."

"I won't do it very often; it was enough meat for 8 people. How far did the 2 of you get on the upstairs?"

"Everything is wired except the bathroom. I got 3 of the 4 bedrooms insulated."

"What next?"

"That depends. If we get home early enough tomorrow, I'll insulate the 4th bedroom. After that, I want to get the sheetrock up, taped and primed before Dave and I start the bathroom. I also want to strip the walls in the staircase and replace the plaster with

sheet rock. Then we'll do the downstairs bathroom. I know I could have gotten by not stripping the plaster from the closets, but I want the home to be as close to perfect as possible."

"How long do you think it will take?"

"I really have no idea, Dawn, there's so much to do. I want you to start paying back your folks using the money I earn at Casey's."

"Mom said there was no rush."

"Understood. We might have to ask them again and I want to feel free to do so. If we owe them money, I can't do that."

"You're going to have to plan on getting the house done in 8 months?"

"Why?"

"I'll have to take time off from my job, maybe a couple of months."

"Why?"

"To have our baby, silly."

"What did you say?"

"I'm pregnant."

"But when?"

"I think the night we lost power."

"Great!"

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"How's she doing?"

"The doctor said to expect protracted labor because this was our first."

"I just learned that Dawn is expecting too."

"Congratulations. We'll have to hurry up and get you house finished up. Still planning on putting in a sewing room and a den?"

"Why not, we only want 2."

“What do you want, a boy or girl?”

“I want the same thing you want, a healthy baby. With any kind of luck, we’ll have the house finished well ahead of Dawn taking maternity leave.”

“Do you still plan on a storm shelter?”

“If possible, yes. I was thinking it might be a good idea to have it connected to the basement with the basement being the primary exit. I have some plans I downloaded from the Internet. I can’t be sure that I want to follow those plans, but it’s a start.”

“Mr. Douglas?”

“Here.”

“Your wife is doing fine. Her labor seems to be progressing and the doctor says that you will be a new father early tomorrow morning.”

“Thanks.”

“Have you picked out names?”

“If the baby is a girl, Susan Rene, if it’s a boy James Scott.”

“Good names. Don’t you know whether it’s a boy or girl?”

“Jeannie never needed an ultrasound.”

“I guess it doesn’t matter, you know in the morning. How do you like the sandwiches?”

“Did Dawn do something special with the meat? This is really good.”

“I asked and other than cooking both roasts in the same pan, she didn’t do anything special.”

“I’m afraid this will kill it for this weekend.”

“No it won’t, depending on when we get home I might have time to put up the insulation in the 4th bedroom.”

“Mind if I ask something?”

“Not at all, what?”

“You had fire in your eyes when you were discussing that storm shelter you want to build. What so exciting about a storm shelter?”

“Well, I’ll tell you, storm shelter is just a label, it might be more appropriate to call it a bunker or survival shelter.”

“Bunker? As in a fortified underground chamber?”

“That’s as good a description as any.”

“Why would you want a bunker?”

“Let’s stick to calling it a storm shelter, if Dawn hears it referred to as a bunker, she might get spooked.”

“Fine, same question.”

“There have been 2 attacks on the World Trade Center, 1993 and 2001. In between there was the attack on the federal building in Oklahoma City. I read that someone, probably the FBI or Homeland Security stopped an attack on Los Angeles.”

“Fairfield, Iowa is in the middle of the sticks. I doubt we’ll ever see anything like that here.”

“I really hope not, Dave. Still even building a regular storm shelter isn’t cheap. I figured to double my investment and put in an underground shelter that would be up to all challenges, storms or a NBC attack.”

“NBC?”

“Nuclear, biological or chemical.”

“You’re nuts.”

“I’ll remember that when you and your family come asking to be let in.”

“I didn’t mean it that way, Don, but a bunker? What the heck, I’ll help you build it. Are you planning on moving that generator down there too?”

“I’m not sure, but probably.”

“What about water and sewage?”

“I can put in a holding tank and a sewage pump to raise the waste to the septic system. It shouldn’t be that hard to run a pipe from the well. The actual well is under that man-hole cover on the slab next to the well house.”

The Family Farm – Chapter 3

“I didn’t know that.”

“Neither did I until I got curious and pulled the manhole cover. I have no idea why it was built that way.”

“That’s going to mean doubling up on a few things.”

“Like what?”

“Hot water heater, stove, refrigerator, toilet and shower.”

“I may put in a combination kitchen like you see in some of the motels that have kitchenettes. You know what I mean, stove, refrigerator, oven and microwave all built into a single unit. There are several companies that build them.”

“How big of a bunker are you planning on building?”

“Storm shelter. Get bunker out of your mind. Again, I don’t really know, possibly as big as the basement.”

“You know, I could see something like that if you were in a big city, but Fairfield?”

“Try to imagine what would happen if someone, anyone, exploded a nuke in Des Moines. The prevailing winds are from the west. Some of that fallout could end up in this area. Fairfield is only 98 miles east-northeast of Des Moines.

“I still think that you’re nuts, but like I said, I’ll help.”

o

“Well?”

“James Scott Douglas, 6 pound 9 ounces.”

“Congratulations. I think we’d better get home and clean up; we just have time to make it to church. Tell Jeannie congratulations.”

“Ready to go?”

“Do we really have to go to church, I’m beat.”

“I suspect that God will forgive us if we skip just this one time. We’ll get some sleep and I’ll finish the insulation this afternoon.”

“What were Dave and you having the heated discussion about?”

“I want to build a storm shelter after we get everything else done.”

“We have a basement.”

“That’s what Dave said. I want something separate, yet connected to the basement. I have some plans off the Internet and when it comes time to think about it, we’ll discuss it.”

“You know with that war in Iraq and my being pregnant, I’m just glad you didn’t enlist in the Army.”

“Actually I did. I couldn’t pass the physical. They detected a minor heart murmur. I had it checked out at the University of Iowa and it was something minor. But you and I were dating by the time I had the results. I gave up on the idea rather than push the Army.”

“Should I be concerned?”

“I shouldn’t think so; I took some pills, got back to normal and haven’t had any trouble since. If I really had a problem, Dawn, it would have shown up by now with my working 80 hours a week.”

“Did they have any idea what caused the problem?”

“They thought maybe a poor diet. I was cutting weight to get into the service.”

“You’ve never been fat.”

“I put on weight when I was playing softball. We usually had a few beers after the games.”

o

Don wasn’t what you’d call a drinking man either. He’d buy a 12-pak and never touched it unless he had company or had put in an especially hard day around the farm. His favorite drink was unsweetened iced tea. Dave was pretty much the same way and after a long day in the upstairs they have one beer. Don was more careful these days, not wanting to gain weight and then end up dieting. He and Dawn attended the First United Methodist Church in Fairfield, one of twelve churches in the community.

It didn’t take long for word to get around about Dawn being pregnant. Although Fairfield was a County Seat, the population was under 10,000. If the name seems familiar, it was the home of Maharishi International University, now called the Maharishi University of Management. It came as a surprise to many who knew of her difficulty getting pregnant. The candlelight supper when the power failed?

However, Dawn's pregnancy gave Don a new sense of urgency. Not only did he want the house finished, he wanted the storm shelter finished before the baby came. Although Don clearly had more than a storm shelter in mind, that was the way he preferred to view it, it kept him from revealing more and allowed him to avoid criticism. Iowa is one of those places where people thought you were certifiable if you built a bomb shelter.

By having such a huge generator, he could supply all of their electrical needs and as long as he had fuel, he could keep the farm operating, tornado or worse. This old farmhouse was about 40' square. His intention was to build a shelter the size of the basement, 40' square or 1,600 ft², not including the separate room where he intended to house the generator. On his computer, he kept lists of all the things he wanted to stock the shelter with. Water wouldn't be a problem but he'd have to have that sewage pump. He also wanted enough food to provide for his family for a full year.

In order for the shelter to be fully secured against any threat, be it weather or NBC, he knew he need an air filtration system and had the LUWA system and Safe Cell on his list. Also on that list was enough fuel to power the generator for a full year. At full load, he'd need 4.2 gallons times 8,766 hours or 37,000 gallons. It was more likely they'd only run the generator at 25% power and his minimum goal was 13,150 gallons. With diesel fuel on the high side of \$2.50 a gallon, he estimated that it would cost nearly \$33,000 to fill a minimum sized tank and stabilize it. He had all of the numbers but he most certainly didn't have the money. Even working at Casey's General Store to supplement their income would provide less than \$10,000 a year to fulfill his dream.

Don's job at TSC paid about \$12 an hour or about \$25,000 a year gross. Dawn's job paid them another \$18,000 gross, a grand total of \$53,000 a year gross. Not bad for a young couple just starting out, but they had the mortgage on the farmstead to keep current and the remodeling. Don could clearly see that it would be an uphill battle. There were other things on his lists, but anyone can imagine what a survival oriented person might want to have.

o

"What are you doing?"

"Calculating the insulation in the attic."

"And?"

"I think I'll get it blown in. Unlike most old houses, our attic is unfinished. I used the Owens-Corning calculator and computed the amount of insulation we'd need. They recommend R-38 for this area. We'd be better off getting cellulose insulation blown in. There is only a marginal difference in cost and we could put in R-40 for what I'd have to pay to put in the fiberglass."

“You’re really coming along on the upstairs.”

“I finished the insulation this afternoon. Then I turned off the water and disconnected the bathroom fixtures. With a full weekend next week, I think we’ll be close to having the bath done. I’ll buy the sheetrock and have them stack it in the machine shed sometime this coming week.”

“It’s coming together faster than I thought it would.”

“That reminds me; Dave suggested that we wire the house for music and intercoms. He installed the wiring and the boxes. He told me if we didn’t have the equipment, he’d cover the boxes with blank plates.”

“Did you plan for that?”

“I didn’t even think of it Dawn. We’ve been exceedingly lucky; so far the rewiring hasn’t cost us a thing. Getting all of our plumbing fixtures at 30% of retail really helped too. I was thinking that with Jeannie laid up for a while, maybe you could help her out with shopping.”

“Managing my time?”

“Making a suggestion, Dave and Scotty have been awfully good to us.”

“I was going to offer anyway. I have a doctor’s appointment this week to take the blood test and confirm that I’m pregnant.”

“When do they do the ultrasound?”

“I don’t believe that’s a normal occurrence, Don.”

“Darn, I wanted to get the baby’s room painted way ahead of time.”

“You’ll have time, the baby will sleep with us for the first few weeks. I’m not climbing stairs in the middle of the night.”

o

“How is the family?”

“Hard to get a lot of sleep.”

“I disconnected the plumbing fixtures. We can haul them out to the machine shed. I planned to recycle the sink and the stool and use them in my storm shelter.”

“I suppose you’re going to put in a shower too.”

"I might just do that; people confined in a closed space would get to stinking after a while. Dawn had a blood test and it's confirmed, she's pregnant."

"We can't finish the bath without putting in drywall."

"It's in the machine shed, Dave. Dawn's dad insisted on buying all the sheetrock we'd need. I set it up to make a payment of \$100 a week until we have them reimbursed. I don't like being in debt."

"How much longer do you plan on working 2 jobs?"

"As long as it takes. It isn't hard working at Casey's, it's mostly waiting on people and telling them where to find things."

"When do you want to insulate the attic?"

"That's the good news, we aren't doing it. Owens Corning has a calculator on their website. You enter your zip code and it recommends the level of insulation you should have. On another page, you identify the room, like the attic, and enter the dimensions. It tells you how much material you'll need. They recommend R-38 for the Fairfield area and once I computed the cost, it was more than having someone blow in cellulose."

"That's going to free up a weekend. Are you planning on taking out the plaster in the stairwell?"

"I'd rather not, but it's an outside wall. I can't see that we have a choice."

"Did you talk to Dawn about the music system and the intercoms?"

"I mentioned it. We hadn't planned on the expense."

"Scotty said he'd be here first thing in the morning to install the fixtures. We'd better shake a leg. We need to strip, wire, insulate and have the bath dry walled by the end of the day."

"Dawn is going shopping today. She said she'd check with Jeannie and see what she needs from the store."

o

"What time is it?"

"9pm."

"It's late, I've got to be running. I didn't know if we could get it done in a single day. What are you planning on for flooring?"

"Linoleum tile."

"In a bathroom? That wasn't your best idea ever. I'll bring a piece of linoleum and we'll put in a good floor."

"Supper is in the refrigerator, how much did the two of you get done?"

"The room is ready for Scotty to install the plumbing tomorrow morning. I guess you'll have to go to church without me."

"How much long to finish the upstairs?"

"I think we can get the lid up next weekend. Then we can have the insulation contractor blow in the insulation during the week. The week after, we can finish installing the sheetrock. The stairwell will take a weekend and then we can start on the downstairs. I'd say the upstairs would be done within a month, except for painting the kids rooms."

"I looked, what are those extra outlet boxes?"

"Phone, or did you mean the ones by the door?"

"I assumed those were the intercom boxes. A phone in every room?"

"Dave wired the place like he wires most new homes."

"I checked at Radio Shack. All they sell are wireless intercoms."

"Dave mentioned he had an old intercom system that he took out of an office he re-wired. He told me that if we wanted it, we could have it."

"You're going to owe your soul to Dave and Scotty."

"I am not! Dave is my best friend and I think he plans on using our storm shelter if something comes up."

"He'd drive all the way from Fairfield in a storm? Hogwash. What aren't you telling me Don?"

"Well... The storm shelter is going to be more than a simple storm shelter. I was going to make it about 40' square and its roof would be level with the floor of the basement."

"Sounds like a World War Two bunker."

“Storm shelter, not a bunker. I had the same discussion with Dave. I figured I’d make it livable for several days. The sink and stool from the upstairs bath are set aside to use when I build it.”

“What no shower?”

“I’ll put in a shower. You said you wanted the woodstove from the basement in the kitchen after we remodeled. I figured to move your electric stove down there. At first I considered one of those kitchenettes, but they’re too expensive. As we redo the kitchen, we can replace the appliances and use the old ones in the storm shelter.”

“How much is this fancy shelter of yours going to cost?”

“A couple of loads of concrete.”

“Don’t kid a kidder, Don.”

“Well... I planned to build a detached room for the generator. I doubt Dave will charge us to wire that up. We’re going to need a larger fuel tank, too. If we plant a garden next year, we can start canning and store the canned goods in the shelter. From now on, why don’t you just buy larger boxes of the things we eat?”

“For instance?”

“Minute Rice is as good an example as any. It also comes in a large 4½ pound box and you can buy that instead.”

“You’re a strange one. What’s gotten into you?”

“Responsibility. You’re expecting and we have a place of our own. In a few months, the house will be remodeled and not long after that we’ll have a child. We’re in the tornado belt.”

“Don, you’re going to have gray hair before you’re 30.”

“More likely I’ll be bald. So what, if we’re safe, who cares? Casey’s offered to let me be the night manager. It pays an extra \$40 a week. I think I’ll take it, we could use the money for the remodeling project.”

“Do you intend on checking with Tractor Supply? They might not like you having 2 permanent jobs.”

“I have permission to work at Casey’s and I don’t plan to stay forever. I can make enough extra wages in a year to pay for the concrete for the shelter.”

◦

“Hi Scotty, how have you been?”

“Busy, Don. There is lots of construction in Ottumwa. Where are the fixtures?”

“In the machine shed still in their boxes.”

“Let’s shake a leg, I can only spare today.”

“Will everything fit?”

“Yes but it’s going to be tough getting that bath/shower enclosure in here. I think we’ll do that first. With luck, I should be done by 2pm.”

“While you’re getting the fixtures, I’ll knock the seams off the sheetrock.”

Actually it was 1:30 when Scotty finished up. There wasn’t much to do, install a bath-tub/shower enclosure, a vanity and a stool. Dave had been by at oh dark thirty with a roll of linoleum and before Scotty got there, they had the floor done. When Scotty finished, all the bath need was a coat of paint. And by done, the room was completely operational. Dave and Don slapped on a coat of off-white semi-gloss. One down.

“Nice.”

“Next weekend we’ll hang the sheetrock and tape it if we have time. Insulation will follow. Do you want to do the painting or should Dave and I plan on doing it?”

“I’ll do it. What did you plan to do with the floors?”

“I thought maybe I’d rent a sander and sand and seal them. Most people would kill to have hardwood floors.”

“You’d better plan on doing that before I paint, I don’t want my paint dinged up.”

“What about the woodwork?”

“I’m going to strip it and sand it, it’s hardwood too.”

“When are you going to find the time?”

“Good question, but I don’t have an answer.”

o

While Dave and Don worked to finish the upstairs, Dawn and Jeannie stripped the wood trim and sanded it. A month later, Don announced that the upstairs and the stairwell were done.

“Perfect. How much do you think this added to the value of our home?”

“I have no idea, Dawn; nothing as far as I’m concerned. What it did do was cut our heating cost. Did you remember to order a load of coal?”

“They’re delivering it next week. What now?”

“I think I’ll take a week off before we start with the master bedroom and bath.”

“Why don’t you do those two rooms and the living room at the same time?”

“If we’re going to do it that way, we’ll include the dining room. I’ll ask Dave to get the dump truck for two weeks from now.”

“Dave? Don. We’re taking next weekend off. Can you line up the dump truck for the following weekend? What? How cheaply? Really? I guess you’d better tell him to start. Does he understand how deep I want the hole? That’s right 20’ deep. He’ll have to make it about 44’ square, we’ll need room to put in the forms and work. The generator room can be about 10’x’14 so the hole will need to be 14’x18’. I think a tunnel about 3’ wide. Did you estimate the concrete? 24 yards for the walls, what about the overhead and the floor? 60 yards? How much all together? $24 + 60 + 10$? What’s the price per yard? Darn, that’s \$4,700 for the concrete. What about rebar? What does that bring the total to? Yeah, tell them to go ahead.”

“What was that all about?”

“Scotty called Dave. A contractor in Ottumwa had a job go belly up on him. He said he’d have to eat a week’s labor in downtime. He offered to put in the shelter at his cost.”

“How much does that come to?”

“About \$5,000 in materials, plus his cost in labor. Dave said about \$7,000.”

“I’ll call mom.”

o

“That’s it, Don, we’ve hit our limit with my folks. Mom said they’d pay for the storm shelter but until we got them paid back a little, we’d be on our own.”

“We can start repaying them right away, \$200 a week. Dave said that that would get the shelter in but we’d have to backfill the hole after the concrete set up 30 days.”

“You’ll have a lot of extra soil, what will you do with it?”

“Fill in low spots.”

“How will this affect the remodeling?”

“It won’t. We have everything we need to finish the house, except for the paint. In a month the only thing left to finish will be your kitchen. Have you picked out what you want for appliances?”

“I picked them out, but I don’t know how we’re going to afford them.”

“I’ll figure something out, what did you pick?”

“We’ll move the woodstove from the basement. I looked at Sears and picked out a black GE Profile 19.5 cu. ft. bottom freezer refrigerator. They had a matching dishwasher.”

“Do you have a total?”

“The dishwasher is \$1,150 and the refrigerator is \$1,480.”

“\$2,630 less 20% is about \$2,100.”

“Wait a minute, how do you figure?”

“I can get Scotty to buy them and get the contractors discount, 20%”

“What about kitchen cabinets?”

“I thought we’d just refinish them, Dawn. Do you have any idea how much glass front cabinets cost? They would be in keeping with you having a wood stove. Are you positive you want that old woodstove in a modern kitchen?”

“You bet. However, you’d better have Dave wire in an outlet for an electric stove in case we ever plan to sell the place. How do you plan to pay for the appliances?”

“I’ll think of something.”

“Right. I’m expecting, we owe almost \$80,000 on the house, we owe mom and dad another \$10,000 and you’re working 2 jobs. What did you do, plant a money tree?”

“I have an idea.”

The Family Farm – Chapter 4

“What idea?”

“We won’t need the appliances for at least 10 weeks. If we pay your mom and dad \$200 a week, we’ll have the balance reduced to \$8,000. I will personally ask your dad to front the cost of the appliances. At \$200 a week, we’ll have them paid off in a year.”

“I’ll warn mom that we’re paying them off so we can borrow more money. She’ll work daddy over good and when you ask, he’ll say yes. You do know she thinks you’re crazy, don’t you?”

“I suspected. I don’t care; we’re going to have a thoroughly modern home in 10 weeks. Well, except for that wood stove and the furnace.”

“Sometimes honey the old things are the best. I used to bake in that stove before Aunt Mary got her electric stove. She baked homemade bread and it was about the best bread you’ve ever eaten. I may be a little rusty, but it won’t take long for me to get up to speed using that oven. Then you can plan on eating homemade bread.”

“Beautiful, very nice figure and she bakes bread? How did I ever get so lucky?”

“Luck had nothing to do with it. I spotted you one time when Daddy sent me to Tractor Supply for something. I knew after our 3rd date, I’d found my man.”

“Is that the way it always works?”

“I don’t know about the rest of the world, but that’s how we ended up married.”

“And if I hadn’t proposed?”

“I have friends too, Don, you didn’t have a chance. You would have been the loneliest man in Fairfield. Of course, at the time I didn’t know you were one of those survivalists.”

“Survivalists have armories. What do I have? I have a .22 rifle and a Remington 870 Express combo. That isn’t what I’d call a survivalist’s arsenal.”

“Yeah right. You think you’re serious, but I know better. Once you get the house remodeled and the shelter equipped, you be moving your gun safe to the shelter and ready to start buying assault rifles.”

“Possibly, but what do you care? Everything I’ve done so far has been for you and now our baby. Remember when I told you that I had responsibilities? That includes protecting my family. It’s going to be a while before I get that shelter finished. I can go through Dave and Scotty and get some of the stuff wholesale. The thing I can’t get wholesale is diesel fuel. To be really prepared, we’d need about 13,000 gallons of diesel fuel.”

“Why don’t you buy biodiesel? Uncle Ralph uses nothing but 100% biodiesel in his farm equipment.”

“I didn’t even know 100% biodiesel was available.”

“The commercial stuff is 80-20. He buys his from New Alliance FS, Inc. right there in Fairfield.”

“Why pure biodiesel?”

“The more biodiesel there is in the blend, the cheaper the product. He made a deal to buy pure biodiesel and it is about 60% cheaper than #2 diesel.”

“Depending on the load on the generator, we’d need anywhere from 13,150 to 37,000-gallons of diesel.”

“For how long?”

“One year.”

“One year? What are you expecting, the end of the world?”

“Possibly the end of the world as we know it, TEOTWAWKI.”

“From a tornado?”

“Possibly more, have you been watching the news?”

“What do you mean?”

“In 1993, terrorists bombed the World Trade Center. In 1995, a domestic terrorist bombed the federal building in Oklahoma City. On 9/11/01, terrorists succeeded in bringing down the WTC. Then the President declared the war on terror. We announced that the war in Iraq was over, so why are our troops still dying in Iraq? All we succeeded in doing was angering the Muslims. What about that guy out in California? You know, the guy from Lodi. The feds claim they stopped a terrorist plot to shoot up Los Angeles. I don’t know why they bothered, but they did.”

“You didn’t mention Afghanistan.”

“That’s an entirely different story, Dawn. Afghanistan is going to be our second Vietnam. The military has already warned that the best-case scenario would be a civil war and the worst-case scenario would be Iraq becoming another Iran. Either way, if we stay there, the Muslims will eventually attack the US. I don’t know that Osama has nukes,

but what's the difference? There are all of those poor man nuclear weapons like biological stuff and chemicals."

"Is that why you built the shelter?"

"Prepare for the worst and hope for the best, Dawn."

o

"I checked with Scotty, Don, you can figure an underground storage tank at about \$1 a gallon. How big of a tank were you thinking about?"

"35,000 gallons."

"What? A 35,000-gallon Xerxes fiberglass tank is 12' in diameter and 49'4" long. New, it would cost you \$35,000, give or take. You might be able to find a used tank and get it certified, but it would probably cost you about 15-20 grand."

"I don't know what to do, Dave."

"They're demolishing a service station in Ottumwa. Why don't you talk to the guy doing the demolition?"

"Do you suppose that Scotty would have time? I don't know when I could find the time."

"Call him and ask."

"Scotty, Don. Dave told me that they demolishing a service station in Ottumwa. Do you know anything about it? You have the contract? What are you going to do with the used tanks? What do you mean scrap? Do they leak? How many are there and how much do they hold? I'm in the market for used tanks, I need to store up to 37,000 gallons of diesel. You can? Great, bring them down to the farm when you get a chance."

"I hate one sided conversations."

"Scotty has the contract to demolish the station. He said that the tanks are only 3 years old and are double walled fiberglass. They had 3 15,000-gallon tanks and he was going to scrap them. He said that he'd bring them down to the farm and we could work something out on the price. There's no hurry to pay him."

"Is the generator all hooked up?"

"Dave moved the automatic transfer switch and rewired it. He told me that it tested out fine."

"When did he do that?"

“After they installed it in the new generator room. He came out one day when he didn’t have anything to do. He used the emergency access to the shelter. He also said that our putting in the basement access was a very good idea, he almost fell.”

“I wondered why the tank had been moved. I didn’t even look to see if they moved the generator.”

“Scotty also told me that they’d dig the hole and put the tanks in. Honey, I’m going to owe Dave and Scotty big time.”

“Maybe when the world ends, we can put them up in your bunker.”

“It’s big enough.”

◦

“What do you think?”

“It looks nice, Don. Our old furniture looks awful. You just have the kitchen left?”

“Uh-huh. Where are you going to cook while we remodel?”

“I thought I’d just microwave, you’re never home for dinner anyway. I love the new bathroom. I’ll tell mom that we need the money for the refrigerator and dishwasher.”

“You know, when we have the remodeling done, we ought to get a realtor to take a look at the place and give us an unofficial appraisal.”

“Why?”

“I’d like to know what my working 16-hours a day and every weekend since I don’t know when has gotten us.”

“I thought you were talking about selling the farmstead.”

“Not on your life. What did the doctor say about the baby today?”

“Babies, one of each. He heard 2 heartbeats and did an ultrasound. You can paint one room pale pink and the other pale blue. Not to change the subject, but did you check into the biodiesel?”

“To get the same price as your uncle does, we have to buy 1,000-gallons at a time. He’s on the Board of the Co-op and that’s the only reason he gets his fuel cheap. In order to get us cheap fuel, I’d have to mount our diesel tank on a wagon and haul it over to his place. They’d fill the tank when they filled his. He told me we’d have to have the cash up

front. Look, we have about everything done with the house, how about you start saving your salary and we'll use it to buy the things we need for our babies and some bio-diesel? I'll keep giving my Casey's paycheck to your folks until we have them paid off."

o

"Wow!"

"I thought you'd like it. Pretty nice isn't it?"

"Where did you get the firewood?"

"I bought a cord of split hardwood. We don't have a fireplace and it will be solely for the kitchen."

"You need softwood for kindling."

"I got a rick, it should last quite a while."

"How much is a rick?"

"About $\frac{1}{3}$ of a cord."

"What kind of hardwood?"

"Apple."

"Is the softwood split for kindling?"

"I was planning on doing that this weekend."

"I need some now to start a fire."

"How much?"

"Maybe an armload."

"You have that glow now."

"I'm bigger than a barn. Mom gave us all of her old cast iron. You watch me now, I'll fatten you up."

"I'm looking forward to the homemade bread."

o

Time out. Taking stock, let's talk about what Don, Dave and Scotty accomplished in less than a year. The old farmhouse was completely remodeled. Don had a 1,600 ft² shelter equipped with a 50kw generator, but only 1,000-gallons of fuel. Scotty was bringing 3 15,000-gallon tanks that Don and Dawn still need to reimburse him for. Don had worked 2 jobs fulltime ever since they had gotten married, 2½ years. Even if Don could get bio-diesel from Dawn's uncle, it would cost a lot to fill 3 15,000-gallon tanks.

What didn't Don and Dawn have?

They didn't have an arsenal. Iowa is a state that requires people to use shotguns to hunt deer and although center fire rifles are available, not every store carries them. Don owed his in-laws about \$10,000. On top of that they had a balance on their mortgage on the house of about \$79,000. They didn't have any radiation detection equipment, a blast door between the basement and the shelter, nor any gas masks. At this point, about all they're prepared for is that tornado. However, it makes sense because the most likely natural disaster to occur in Iowa would be a tornado. The second most likely natural disaster would be a flood and third, an earthquake.

Dave had used conduit and wired the shelter. The old refrigerator and stove went to the shelter along with the used bathroom and kitchen plumbing furnishings. Don had picked up a simple shower enclosure through Scott and the shelter had a regular, albeit small, bathroom. Under the shelter was a 1,000-gallon wastewater tank that could be pumped into their septic system. A waterline came directly from the underground well to supply water to the shelter.

The realtor gave them a rough appraisal of \$280,000 including the out buildings. Sweat builds equity. However, that was what the house was worth if it were located in town; in the country, it would depend more on the buyer, if they wanted to sell. Fairfield is a nice community, although I've never been there. The house in the Grant Wood painting, *American Gothic* is located in the Fairfield area.

o

"Since the two of you know it's a boy and a girl, have you picked out names?"

"Fred and Ethyl?"

"Really."

"Natalie and Richard."

"Anyone in either family have those names?"

"Not that I know of."

"How did you pick them?"

“The male lead in West Side Story was a guy from Iowa named Richard Beymer. His costar was Natalie Wood.”

“What about middle names?”

“I left that up to Dawn. She picked Richard David and Natalie Anne.”

“Richard David and Natalie Anne? I like it.”

“She wanted to name him Richard Harrison Reynolds, but she figured he’d get kidded about his name.”

“Oh, what was that movie?”

“Six Days Seven Nights, Harrison Ford and Anne Heche.”

“She’s gay.”

“She’s married and cute. They have a baby boy.”

“How is Dawn feeling?”

“She hasn’t been feeling well.”

“Have you done any more with your shelter?”

“No, Dave, I’m working on getting my in-laws paid off. Then I have to pay Scotty for those tanks. I have 3 large, empty diesel fuel tanks. It would take 3 semi loads of fuel to fill them, can you imagine the cost?”

“At \$2.60 a gallon, it would be expensive.”

“Right. Not to mention buying 22.5 gallons of Pri-D if I put in #2 diesel. Actually, I was thinking about putting in pure biodiesel. That would be a whole lot cheaper.”

“They sell B20 in town.”

“I know, but Dawn’s uncle uses pure biodiesel on his farm. He pays about \$1 a gallon.”

“It would pay a man to switch to diesel vehicles at that price.”

“I’ve been talking to him. If I can get a 1,000-gallon tanker, he’ll fill it for me and I can put it in my tanks. He needs to have cash up front and at the moment, I don’t have it.”

“Have you furnished your shelter?”

“We’ve been putting a little food down there, but nothing significant. Right now, it’s just a big hole in the ground with very few furnishings. If Dawn can work for 2 more months, we’ll have more food. However, she’s missed 2 days already this week.”

o

“Don, I have to go to the hospital.”

“Did you pack a bag?”

“No, let’s go, I’m bleeding.”

“Let me help you to the car.”

“Dave, this is Don. Dawn and I are at Jefferson County Hospital. There’s a problem. Fine, I see you when you get here.”

“What did you do with James?”

“He’s at my mother’s, Don, how is Dawn?”

“I don’t know, you know how hospitals are.”

“Mr. Reynolds?”

“Here.”

“The babies are premature but they’re doing fine. We have them in incubators.”

“My wife?”

“Mrs. Reynolds will be fine. Unfortunately I have a bit of bad news. Your wife had heavy placental bleeding during childbirth. We didn’t really have a choice; we had to perform a hysterectomy. She won’t be able to have any more children.”

“But the two we have now are ok?”

“They’re rather small, a little over 3 pounds each. We will be transporting them to the University Hospital in Iowa City as soon as the helicopter arrives.”

“Is there a problem?”

“Not really, it’s mostly a precaution. Your wife is sedated; it will be a while before you can see her.”

“Crap.”

“What do you want to do, Don?”

“I’m going to call Dawn’s parents to come here. Next I’m going to call Casey’s and quit. Finally, I’m going to drive to Iowa City.”

“I don’t believe you’re in shape to drive, Don. Jeannie will stay here and wait for Dawn’s folks. I’ll drive you to Iowa City. Give her the keys to your car.”

o

What are friends for? How many times can you use a friendship before it become abusing a friendship? Many thoughts were going through Don’s mind on their way to Iowa City. Was Dawn going to be ok? The babies ok? The 64-mile drive only took Dave an hour. In northeastern and north central Iowa, people are generally transferred to Rochester, Minnesota, site of the Mayo Clinic. In south central, southeastern Iowa and eastern Iowa, the transfer is usually to the University Hospitals and Clinics in Iowa City.

“I’m Don Reynolds. My babies were just transferred here by helicopter. Who do I speak to?”

“Yes, Mr. Reynolds, could you please fill out these forms while I get a nurse.” (Every hospital in the US wants your insurance before they stop the flow of blood.)

“Mr. Reynolds? Could you walk this way?”

“I don’t think so, but I’ll try. How are my twins?”

“We have them in incubators and they’re doing fine. It’s a shame about your wife, but I understand she’s going to be ok.”

“She was sedated when we left.”

“The hospital called. She’s awake and doing well. They said that her friend and her parents were there. Your children are in the two incubators on the right.”

“How long will they be here?”

“They will be able to go home when:

1. They take all feedings by nipple and continue to gain weight. Maintain body heat in an open infant bed;
2. Breathe well; and,

3. Have normal breathing and a normal heart rate for a week.”

“You said a lot, but you didn’t tell me anything.”

“It will probably be a month or two.”

“Can I hold them?”

“Not for a while.”

“Dave I think you’d better take me back to Fairfield.”

o

For the next 7 weeks, Don was well occupied. Dawn was out of the hospital in less than a week. She seemed to adjust to her circumstances, especially when she finally got to see Richard and Natalie. They were gaining weight but until their lungs and hearts met the hospital’s criteria, they were going to remain in Iowa City. Dawn was taking a while to heal; the doctor suggested that it could take her up to 6 weeks to feel normal. Don got a promotion at work and became the Assistant Manager. It appeared that their circumstances had changed far more than they planned and Dawn submitted her resignation with Jefferson County.

Richard and Natalie were home after 6 weeks with no conditions. U of I hospital supplied a monitor and both babies shared the same room upstairs. Dawn wore the receiver on her belt. Having two insurance plans meant that 100% of the hospital bills were covered. Life can change in an instant and when it does, many of your plans change as well. Scott told Don that he could wait for the money for the fuel tanks. Don eked out a reduced payment for Dawn’s parents. The shelter remained uncompleted.

“Can I help you?”

“Are you Don Reynolds?”

“Yes.”

“I have instructions to deliver 5,000-gallons of biodiesel here. Where is your tank?”

“Who instructed you to deliver the fuel?”

“Do you know Ralph Smith?”

The Family Farm – Chapter 5

“That’s my wife’s uncle.”

“Now you know who. Where is your tank?”

“I have 3, the access lids are over there.”

“Is that tank on the stand filled with diesel?”

“Yes.”

“Why don’t you dump about $\frac{1}{3}$ third of it into each tank and I’ll divide the fuel among the tanks? That will start you out with B20.”

“Sure. Are you sure I don’t owe you anything?”

“The fuel is paid for.”

“Dawn, the strangest thing just happened. Did you know anything about your uncle Ralph buying us 5,000-gallons of biodiesel?”

“Un-un.”

“Well he did, they just delivered the fuel.”

“Mom called.”

“What up? Is there a problem? I know I made the last payment.”

“She said that Daddy and she were reducing what we owed by \$5,000.”

“Wow! Why?”

“The family had a get together and they all agreed to each contribute the same amount to help us out.”

“Then that means that...”

“We’re halfway there.”

Don was stunned. He all but collapsed in a chair. What I hadn’t told you about Don was that he was an orphan and an only child. His maternal aunt, a divorcee, had raised Don and she had died of cancer when he’d been a senior in high school. Which might explain why Dawn had nearly been forced to propose. If a person doesn’t have anyone close to them, there is no one to grieve over. He was more certain than ever on that

long drive to Iowa City 7 weeks before. Now, he wasn't so sure. It was one thing for your friends to help you out with a project. He hadn't really experienced the family thing. Apparently Dawn's other two uncles got together with Ralph. Before they were done, Don and Dawn had 16,000 gallons of fuel, giving them a mixture that was 93.75% bio-diesel.

o

Saturday morning...

"We came to see the babies."

"Come on in. I meant to thank you for driving me to Iowa City."

"You already have, about 3 different times."

"I did? Well, now it's 4 times."

"How is everyone doing?"

"It's different. I'm only working one job now. That pretty well crimped my style, but Dawn's family has been very generous. We have 16,000-gallons of fuel now and we owe her folks considerably less."

"I have something in the back of the truck."

"What?"

"Bunks. A shelter isn't much of a shelter if you have to sleep on the floor."

"Wait a minute. You rewired my house and provided all of the materials. You wired up my generator twice. Friendship can't extend this far."

"Sure it can, wait until you see how many bunks I brought."

"12 beds?"

"6 bunk pairs. They are for you and Dawn, Jeannie and I and Scotty and Marilyn and their 2 kids. Besides, they didn't cost anything so I took all that were available. The mattresses are used, but what the heck."

"I'll clean them up and slap on a coat of paint. What's in the boxes?"

"A couple of folding tables and a dozen folding chairs. I couldn't find any used, but these were on sale. What do you know about computers?"

“Not a lot, why?”

“I brought the old one I used to use. Maybe you can fix it up and get it to work. I think it needs a hard disc drive. Now, there’s something that you can do for me.”

“Name it.”

“Move your gun safe to the shelter.”

“If you want to help, sure. Why do we want to move it?”

“I thought you were a survivalist.”

“I have never claimed to be a survivalist, only survival oriented. A survivalist would have an arsenal; all I have is a .22 rifle and a shotgun.”

“And a bunker with a 50kw generator, 16,000-gallons of fuel and some food.”

“That’s a long way from having a complete shelter. I need an air filtration system, a blast door on the basement entrance, firearms, medical supplies and several other things.”

“Like what?”

“A couple of radiation detectors, perhaps a CD V-715 and a CD V-717. I’d need dosimeters and a charger, too, one dosimeter for every person in the shelter. We don’t have any protective clothing or gas masks.”

“Did you hear what you just said?”

“What, that we didn’t have any protective clothing or gas masks?”

“Focus on the ‘we’, Don.”

“Oh.”

“I guess I did say we, didn’t I. Well, I always figured you and Scotty and your families would be with us in the shelter. That’s why I built it so darned big.”

“Scotty got the air filtration system. LUWA, right?”

“Yes. They make blast valves too and I need to get those for the air intake and exhaust plus the generator intake and exhaust.”

“He has them, 4 of the 3-bar blast valves.”

“I haven’t even paid him for the fuel tanks.”

“You won’t have to either, he and I talked it over and we’re forming a MAG.”

“A what?”

“A mutual assistance group, MAG for short.”

“I don’t get it.”

“You have a shelter 10 miles from town. You have a generator and some fuel. We have some of the things you don’t have and can’t afford. As we can see our way clear, we’ll continue to add to the stores. You can plant a garden and grow some food to can. Once you get yourself out of debt, I’ll help you select some weapons for an arsenal.”

“What for instance?”

“It doesn’t matter at the moment. Something a bit more powerful than a .22.”

“Like a 30-06?”

“7.62×51mm.”

“Aren’t those illegal in Iowa?”

“If they’re full auto, yes, otherwise, no. Large capacity magazines are also legal in Iowa. Any military weapon in a 5.56×45mm or 7.62×51mm caliber is legal, as long as it isn’t select fire or full auto. Only certain peace officers and the military can have full auto or select fire weapons. In Iowa, we need a permit to purchase a handgun and carry a handgun concealed. The laws are sort of middle of the road, not as liberal as some states, but far more liberal than a place like California. Iowa doesn’t allow NFA firearms – machineguns and silencers.”

“What kind of rifle do you like?”

“Scotty and I have Heckler and Koch rifles, both in 7.62×51mm caliber and 5.56×45mm caliber. We have M1911 handguns, the .45 pistols you see in the movies. We have .22 rifles and 12-gauge shotguns for hunting, the same as you do. However, we have much more ammo than you probably have for your weapons.”

“You were the guy who was giving me such a hard time over my bunker.”

“Yes, and you didn’t back down. There is probably nothing worse than a sheeple in survivalist’s clothing. I had to help you with the house, especially when you discussed your shelter. Each of the 3 of us has a considerable investment in this protection.”

“Do Jeannie and Marilyn know about it?”

“Several people know about it. When you used the contractor to erect it, you might as well have put a notice in the paper. We intend to correct that by putting in the basement entrance blast door. I took the measurements and Scotty is having it fabricated out of some used road plates he picked up somewhere. He’ll be by later today to install the blast valves and air system. Did you know the system is rated for 50 people?”

“Dave, putting 50 people in a 1,600ft² shelter would really crowd it. A dozen comes out to 133ft² per person. Fifty is only 32ft² per person.”

“I understand, Don, really. The question comes down to how many people do you let in and when do you stop. I figured you go along if I showed up with bunks and furniture for twelve. Now I want you to think about whom you would be willing to let in beside 12 people.”

“Wait a minute, 3 couples and 5 kids is only 11.”

“Right and the 3 babies would probably be in cribs, so that means we’d have room for 4 more adults. You pick them.”

“I have no family, Dave. Becky has her parents plus 3 aunts and uncles. You know how it is with their kids. They went to college and left Iowa. I can see 14 adults, Scotty’s 2 and the babies.”

“Add two more, our parents. 16 adults, 2 children under 10 and 3 babies.”

“That about 76ft² per person. Maybe we could handle that, but what about tables, chairs and bedding? What about plates, utensils and cooking for that many people?”

“Five sets of Melamine, some cheap silver from Wal-Mart, one more table and a half dozen chairs and we’re covered.”

“Ok, I buy that, I told you I built it big.”

“You don’t have a hot water heater down there, do you?”

“No.”

“I didn’t think so. The things that Scotty is bringing include 6 more chairs, another table, 4 blast valves, blast door if it’s finished, the air filtration system and a 50-gallon electric hot water heater. What’s the run time for the amount of fuel you have?”

“Something on the order of 450 days at 25% power and 148 days at full power.”

“Quarter power is 12.5kw?”

“Yes, about 52 amps.”

“Why such a big generator?”

“It’s rated at 208 amps, the farm has a 200 amp main service panel.”

“At least your instincts are right.”

“Good, at least I did something that you approve of.”

“When Scotty arrives, let’s lug your safe to the shelter.”

◦

“Hey bro, what kept you?”

“I had to get the table and chairs. Marilyn hasn’t seen the house; would anyone care to give her the tour?”

“I’ll do it. Hi, Marilyn, follow me. We tour it in the order the guys remodeled it.”

“Dawn, I heard about your problem with your delivery, I really sorry.”

“Thanks, but don’t be. Don and I only wanted 2 and we got a boy and a girl.”

“OK. Let’s get the stuff to the shelter and get it installed. The blast door won’t be ready until the first of the week. We’re going to have to fabricate the portion that fits the entrance to the tunnel onsite.”

“Dawn, what do you have out for supper?” Don asked in a hushed tone.

“It’s covered,” she replied in a whisper.

“Ok. The intake blast valve is a cinch. I brought a piece of pipe for the blast valve for the exhaust. Where do you want the air intake?”

“I suppose as close as possible to the air intake and exhaust pipes. They’re in the storage room.”

“Can the 2 of you manage the gun safe while I install the blast valves?”

“Sure, it isn’t extra heavy, Iowa doesn’t require a gun safe. The only reason I had it was to keep out a thief and the kids.”

“What no toilet paper?”

“It was on our list, but we haven’t gotten it yet.”

“Scotty did you order the survey meters and the dosimeters?”

“Yeah, I got the kit and added more dosimeters, 20 bottles of potassium iodide and 20 more dosimeters.”

“I can understand more of that stuff, but what are the odds of our getting radiation?”

“The Duane Arnold nuclear reactor is in Palo, less than 85 miles away. Say, where is your communications gear?”

“I don’t have any.”

“Not even an FRS walkie-talkie?”

“Nothing.”

“Wait a minute, I’ll make a list. Stop me if I say something wrong: Fuel, weapons, ammo, web gear, communications gear, food, toilet paper, medical supplies, compact washer and dryer, freezer, gas masks and protective clothing.”

“Why are you including appliances?”

“Jeannie and I have the stacking washer and dryer we started out with. You’ll want to change your clothes occasionally, I assume. Don’t forget, we have 3 kids in diapers. I won’t buy you any firearms, but I’m willing to help you get what I think you should have.”

“Which is what?”

“It depends on how much you have to spend. I’d prefer that you got a HK91, a HK93 and 2 M1911s, possibly a STG58 Austrian FAL. Scotty and I have more than enough magazines for our rifles. FAL magazines are cheaper than dirt and you can pick up extra magazines for the pistols.”

“How much is a FAL rifle?”

“Round numbers, \$1,000. The M1A is more and unless our source has more of the H&Ks, you can’t afford one.”

“Who is your source?”

“Atlantic Firearms. About \$900.”

“It will be a while, I still owe Dawn’s folks about \$2,000, maybe a little more.”

“Whatever. We’ll finish stocking the shelter as we can afford it. Now, doesn’t this look more like a survival shelter?”

“It surely does. Let’s check on Scotty.”

“About done?”

“I think so; would you run the exercise cycle on the generator, please?”

“I guess that I shouldn’t have purchased the weather shelter, but it made sense at the time.”

“No, that was a great idea, you can’t hear the generator in the shelter.”

◦

“Want a beer?”

“Sure.”

“I have any brand you want, as long as it’s Miller Genuine Draft.”

“Longnecks?”

“What else?”

“What’s for supper?”

“Smells like a beef and pork roast combination.”

“Smells good, whatever it is. I take it you don’t have cable?”

“Not this far out. Our principal channel is KGAN.”

“Internet access?”

“Dialup.”

“One line or two?”

“Two. One is unlisted and used for the computers.”

◦

“What all did they bring?”

“Blast valves, LUWA air filtration system, tables, chairs, bunk beds. They’ll be back tomorrow with more things.”

“Like what?”

“The only things I can recall are radiation stuff and Dave and Jeannie’s old stackable washer and dryer.”

“Are those the plain folding chairs or the padded version?”

“Plain.”

“What’s going on, Don? Why are they supplying all of this equipment?”

“They’re planning on using the shelter if something really bad happens. We will have provisions for a total of 21 people. All of your family, that’s 8, we make 12, Dave and Jeannie 15, Scotty and Marilyn 19 and their folks 21.”

“Could they get here in time if a tornado warning were issued?”

“I don’t think that that’s what they had in mind.”

“What did they have in mind?”

“Something more on the order of a major terrorist attack or perhaps WWII.”

“In Iowa?”

“Why not Iowa? If a group of terrorists could seriously affect the crops, it would really hurt the country as far as food goes. Another thing, that reactor up by Cedar Rapids was brought up. It’s only 85 miles away.”

“I think you guys are all overreacting to a possible threat.”

“That may very well be, honey. Look at the other side of the coin. A tornado could take out the house and the farm buildings. Duane Arnold could develop a problem similar to Three Mile Island or Chernobyl. We have a very uneasy relationship with México. After that hurricane last month on the Gulf Coast, some of those reporters were talking about significant racial unrest. If we could manage to top off the fuel tanks and had enough food stored, we could live in the shelter for at least a year, possibly 2.”

“I’d rather die.”

“You could have died from the hemorrhaging you did when the babies were born. Any number of things could happen that would seriously alter our lives. We’d just pull ourselves up by our bootstraps and keep on going. I probably jumped the gun quitting my

job at Casey's but I was numb and had you to care for. The house is done and once we tidy up a few loose ends, we're going to be in better shape than 98% of lowans."

"What's your thinking on new furniture?"

"Once your folks are paid off and everything is done except the fuel supply, I think we can start buying some."

"It wasn't a bad year and a half, was it?"

"We more than doubled the value of our property. If I can find time to paint the buildings and the house, the farm will look like it belongs on a picture postcard."

o

"When are they coming by tomorrow?"

"Probably after church."

"What do you want me to fix for supper?"

"How about some of the southern fried chicken?"

"Ok, but we'll have to stop by the store."

"I can run in and get 4 chickens, do we need anything else?"

"You'd better make it 6 chickens and get a 20 pound bag of potatoes."

o

"Is fried chicken ok for supper?"

"Sure. Scotty is bringing the radiation equipment, his extra weapons and ammo. I brought the washer and dryer and we'll take time to hook it up after he arrives. I also brought shelving we picked up at some garage sales to use in your storeroom. Grab those rifle cases first and set them by your gun safe. Do you have a 2 wheel cart?"

"Just the appliance caddy we used to move the safe."

"That will work; I want to move some of my ammo down to your storeroom."

"How much ammo did you bring?"

The Family Farm – Chapter 6

“Half of what I have: 2 cases of 5.56x45mm, 3 cases of 7.62x51mm, 1 case of .45, 1 mixed case of 12 gauge and 5 bricks of .22. I called in an order for type N-95 masks, 16 adult gas masks, 2 children masks and 3 of the infant bags or whatever they call them. We ordered more bunks and mattress over the Internet, but we’ll have to pick them up, the freight is excessive and they’re too big for UPS. Now, in addition to that, Scotty is bringing the hot water heater and a few odds and ends.”

“I understand about the MAG, but I don’t know if I’m comfortable with the two of you all of a sudden finishing off our shelter. It was tough enough accepting stuff from Dawn’s family.”

“Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall, Don. Chill out. The things are still Scotty’s and mine; we’re just storing them in your shelter. If the tanks and air system are bothering you, work something out with my brother.”

“Like I could, Dave. I priced all of that stuff, you know. It’s very expensive.”

“You’re still thinking retail, think wholesale. Look, everyone who might be in the shelter has to have one of those NOAA radio receivers. I’d recommend everyone come here if they issue a tornado watch. It will be good practice and once a warning is issued, time might be short.”

“For us younger guys that’s not a big deal. The older people it could be more difficult.”

“They all have something invested in your shelter project. It’s mostly fuel but Dawn’s folks actually loaned you the money to put it in.”

“Having the fuel only happened because Dawn’s family wanted to do something after she had the problem when the twins came early. Her folks reduced the loan instead of buying us fuel. You know that none of them has even seen the shelter.”

“You mean you haven’t invited the entire family over to see what you’ve done to the house, ogle the babies and see the shelter?”

“Well, I, we uh... no.”

“Sometimes...”

“Sometimes, what?”

“I started to say that sometimes you could be a real jerk. Then it occurred to me that you lost your parents when you were little and your only aunt raised you. You don’t have much experience with family do you?”

“She died when I was a senior and didn’t even get to see me graduate.”

“And to top that off, you married an only child.”

“We didn’t have much when I was growing up. My aunt was always behind with something and I hate being in debt and owing people.”

“That explains the second job. Why did you remodel the house?”

“Old wiring and no insulation. I kept the coal furnace so I didn’t have to put in a big propane tank. Besides, if something happened, we could burn wood instead of coal. I had plans you know. Paint the out buildings and turn this farmstead into a show place.”

“Don, you have everything you need to fatten a beef, raise a litter of hogs, produce your own eggs and be nearly totally independent.”

“I visited with Dawn about having a family get together. They’ve all seen the babies at her folk’s house. I’ll bet Earnest and Mary would be surprised at what we did to their house.”

“Suggest that Dawn cook a beef and pork roast together; man what a treat.”

o

“Did you talk to everyone and get something set up?”

“This Sunday, after church.”

“I’m sorry; I don’t do family things very well.”

“Now that we have our own, that will change.”

“Do little boys always pee on you when you change their diaper?”

“I’ve heard that they call that the fountain of youth. It’s a good idea to keep a diaper handy in case Ricky erupts.”

“Are we going to have the roast combo?”

“Yes and southern fried chicken. Scott and Dave are coming by too. They’re almost family now.”

“I sometimes wonder how I ever got so lucky. I have a beautiful wife, 2 wonderful babies, and an extended family.”

“Well look at you, you didn’t mention the shelter or the house.”

“Those are material things that I understand. I’m not so good with the people thing.”

“You must do something right, TSC made you an Assistant Manager. That’s not bad for a man under 25.”

“The learning curve is pretty steep.”

“I made up a shopping list of things we’ll need for Sunday. Can you pick the stuff up one night after work?”

“Friday soon enough?”

“Or we can go shopping on Saturday.”

◦

“Scotty, I don’t feel good about all of the things that you installed permanently in our shelter.”

“What’s bothering you Don?”

“I like to pay my own way, you know. You put in 3 fuel tanks, the air filtration system, blast valves and a hot water heater. I really want to work out a way to pay you for the stuff.”

“Forget about the tanks, I had nothing in them. Another thing, I bought those plumbing fixtures at wholesale and sold them to that couple at retail. When I refunded their money, I only gave them half of what I charged them. I actually made a bit of a profit on the deal. My cost was 60% of retail and they’d already paid 50%, net. I could have charged you a third of what I did and broke even. Consider those blast valves a refund of what I overcharged you. You can still pay for the air filtration system, but it’s only about 60% of retail. The hot water heater was the used heater out of that station we demolished, so you can forget that too.”

“How much do I owe you?”

“\$2,700, but there’s no rush.”

“What about those survey meters and the dosimeters?”

“Buried them in my books as safety equipment. Neither Dave nor I are out of pocket on anything except that LUWA system. And let’s face it; this is about the nicest shelter anywhere in the state.”

“I guess I have the brothers that I always wanted.”

“Now you’re starting to get it, Don. Did you discuss firearms with Dave?”

“He mentioned the HK91 and HK93. And then said something about a FAL.”

“There’s a company in Florida that assembles semiautomatic HK91s and the occasional HK93 using their own receivers and the German parts kits. The upside is that the H&Ks are very good weapons and a bit less expensive. The down side is that the FAL magazines are cheaper. The reason he brought up both the HK91 and the HK93 is that the 93 is 5.56x45mm while the 91 is 7.62x51mm. DSA has some Steyr manufactured metric STG58 FALS. Those come as a rifle, a carbine or a Para carbine and range from around \$1,000 to \$1,350. We both prefer the H&Ks, the 7.62x51mms for us and the 5.56x45mms for our wives. The HK91s run about \$900. I suppose that it’s six of one and a half dozen of another.”

“What about the pistols?”

“Get your purchase permit and shop around. Try and find good used M1911s made in America. It’s easy to swap out a barrel and the bushing. And you can buy a packaged deal of magazines for \$80 for 10 new magazines. As far as ammo goes, buy a brick or two of .22 from Wal-Mart, use 9-pellet 00 buck and slugs. The arsenal that makes ammo for the US government sometimes has overruns that they pack loose in 1,000 round boxes. I got ours from New Jersey. Once in a while the guy has it on sale very cheaply for an out-the-door price. I had a driver bringing an order from the east coast swing by and pick up several cases of each. I buried the cost in the transportation charges for the order and my customers ended up paying for the ammo.”

“How did you get away with that?”

“I have a very clever accountant.” (And hasn’t gotten caught.)

o

“Dawn, why don’t you make the introductions to Scott and Dave?”

“Everyone, this is Scott Douglas and his wife Marilyn. That’s Dave Douglas and his wife Jeannie. Scott and Marilyn’s kids are outside on the swing. This is my father, John Smith and my mother, June. Over there is my Uncle Ernest and Aunt Mary. Next to them are my Uncle Ralph and Aunt Rose. Finally there’s my Uncle Ben and Aunt Dawn.”

“This house never looked like this when we lived here, Dawn.”

“It’s the same floor plan, we simply removed the plaster, rewired, insulated and redid the bathrooms.”

“Why did you drag that monstrosity back up from the basement?”

“If fits, don’t the cabinets seem more appropriate with a wood stove? And, I love that wood stove.”

“You always could get a good loaf of bread out of that oven. I tried for years and never could. What kind of wood do you burn?”

“Apple.”

“Dawn, it’s a bit crowded, why don’t Scott, Dave and I wait in the storm shelter?”

“We’ll be down in a few minutes.”

“Great.”

“As you can see, the access to the shelter from the basement is a ramp instead of stairs. This is our shelter.”

“It’s as big as the house!”

“What are all of the bunks for, expecting company?”

“There’s our old stove and refrigerator.”

“The room back there is a storage room for food and other items, more or less a large fruit cellar. The door there is to the tunnel that leads to the generator room. Over there is the $\frac{3}{4}$ bath and the kitchen is next to it. That thing on the wall is an air filtration system that will provide clean, pure air for up to 50 people. If the ladies would like to go upstairs after you’ve looked around, I have something to discuss with the men.”

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“First of all I want to thank each and every one of you for helping us out. This shelter is a storm shelter, but it will weather any kind of storm, natural or man-made. Once we install the blast door in the basement entrance, we can button this place up tight and be safe from storms, and nuclear, biological and chemical attacks. With the available fuel, we could probably stay in this shelter for an extended time. The 16,000 gallons of fuel give us something on the order of 450 days at 25% power and 148 days at full power. Oh, I almost forgot, Dawn had me get each of your favorite brands of beer. It’s in the refrigerator over there.”

“What’s your total fuel capacity?”

“45,000-gallons. That would give us 3½ years at ¼ power and 466 days at full power. Even if we used a lot of fuel to operate farm equipment, we would have 50kwh 24/7 for a full year.”

“Why such a big fuel storage?”

“I had the demolition contract on that station in Ottumwa, Ralph. It was only 3 years old and the tanks were just like new. I gave them to Don to install here. I even gave him the hot water heater out of that station. If you look around, very little of what you see is new, I think that the only new things are the air filtration system and the blast valves.”

“Why do you have so many bunk beds?”

“Some of them are for you. Everyone who has made any kind of investment in this shelter, directly or indirectly, has a bed and will have food. We still have several things to finish up; we need communications gear, more fuel, and a whole lot more food. I have a NOAA radio for each of you. They’ll let you know of any severe weather watches and warnings. I realize that the idea is probably foreign to you, but there is a list of things you should keep handy in case you have to Bug Out and come here.

“Probably the most important thing is your prescriptions. We’ll have first aid supplies, but there is simply no way we can assemble a quantity of prescription meds for everyone. If you wear glasses, it might be wise to have a spare pair. If you have firearms, and I know that most of you do, there is a gun cabinet in the storage room. You might want to bring them along so someone doesn’t break into your home and steal them. Grab another beer and I show you the outside.”

“The original diesel tank was moved over here to supply the generator until we put in the larger tanks. It’s still connected to the generator as an emergency backup fuel supply. Unfortunately the tank is empty. Those 3 small lids are to the fill pipes for the underground diesel tanks. As you know, I have 16,000-gallons of fuel, thanks to you. That square metal hatch over there is the second entrance to the shelter. I have a key for each of you for the padlock on the hatch. I also have a key to the house. Does anyone have any questions?”

“You seem to be acting like it’s the end of the world.”

“Need I remind you of the World Trade Center or Oklahoma City? Now we’ve gotten ourselves into a war on terror. I couldn’t get into the Army for medical reasons, but that doesn’t mean I’m unwilling to protect my family and the people close to me. I suppose my people skills need maturing, but we’re family. You all know I didn’t have much of a family growing up and lost what I had in high school. Scott and Dave have become the brothers I never had and the rest of you the uncles and aunts I didn’t have.”

“I need another beer. What about the rest of you?”

o

“Why don’t you 3 young fellas grab a beer and go upstairs for a while? We want to visit.”

“Scott? Dave?”

“Iced tea.”

“Yeah me too.”

Down in the shelter the 4 brothers were visiting. It would take 30,000-gallons of fuel to fill the tanks and the empty farm tank. Although none of them was wealthy, except for Ralph, they agreed that they would each put up \$10,000 to see the shelter finished. Out of that would come the money Don and Dawn owed John and next they’d fill the fuel tanks, full up. Ralph said he’d get them the \$1 biodiesel to do that. They checked out the storeroom and noticed the empty shelves. If they each made a shopping trip and paid for it out of the money they were putting up, that problem was easily remedied. They also discussed their various medications and decided they’d use some of the remaining the funds to acquire a one-year supply that they could keep at home in a small gym bag. Any leftover funds would be given to Don and Dawn to fill in anything they missed. When they had everything worked out, John went to get the younger men.

“We’ve talked it over and here’s what we’re going to do, Don. Each of us put up \$5,000 when the babies were born. Now we propose to each put up another \$10,000. John will take out what you owe him and June. Then we’re going to fill your tanks with biodiesel. We’re going to make a shopping trip and add the food to the shelves and each lay in a one-year supply of our meds. If there is any money left over, we’ll give it to you and you can get things we might have missed.”

“I don’t know what to say. Thank you!”

“That was the absolutely correct thing to say, Don. Got any more beer?”

“I have whatever is in the refrigerator plus a 12-pak of Miller’s in the refrigerator in the kitchen.”

o

Methodism

Without asking any of the men, Don had included them into the plans for his shelter. As ye sow, so shall ye reap. Even Methodists know that one; Methodists are Christians, too, contrary to the assertions of some. Methodist dab rather than dunk and they’re rather moderate as Christians go – open minded, perhaps like their Heavenly Father is. They believe in the Trinity and all of that Christian stuff. They don’t claim that theirs is the only way to salvation and they use the same Bible as everyone else. Like many reli-

gious groups, they have sects, too. Take the Wesleyan Methodists for example; no make-up, etc. Strictly speaking, the Wesleyan Methodists were the original Methodist Church. Rather than being ignorant about Methodism read about it and find out; don't worry you won't be converted.

The United Methodist Church is the largest Methodist, and the second-largest Protestant, denomination in the United States. In 2004 worldwide membership was about 11 million members: 8.6 million in the US, 2.4 million in Africa, Asia and Europe. The United Methodist Church (UMC) was formed in 1968 as a result of a merger between the Evangelical United Brethren and the Methodist Church, which were themselves the results of mergers. The Methodist Church was formed in 1939 as the result of a merger of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South and the Methodist Protestant Church.

The official doctrinal statements of United Methodism are:

- the Articles of Religion of the Methodist Church;
- the Confession of Faith of the Evangelical United Brethren Church;
- the General Rules of the Methodist Societies;
- the Standard Sermons of John Wesley;
- and John Wesley's Explanatory Notes on the New Testament.

The basic beliefs of the United Methodist Church include:

- Triune God. God is one God in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- Scripture. The writings in the Old and New Testaments are the inspired word of God.
- Sacraments. The UMC recognizes two sacraments: Baptism and Holy Communion. The Church generally practices infant baptism and recognizes baptisms from other denominations, and also practices open communion.
- Inclusivity. The UMC includes and welcomes people of all races, cultures, and ages.
- Free will. The UMC believes that people, while corrupted by sin, are free to make their own choices because of God's prevenient grace.
- Grace. The UMC believes that God gives his love freely to all people. This was a major emphasis of John Wesley.

The UMC is considered one of the more liberal and tolerant denominations with respect to race, gender, and ideology.

Strange bunch, huh? Just in case, some Methodists keep a copy of a Catholic Bible and the Book of Mormon handy. Some may even have a crucifix hanging over their computer. It's called hedging or perhaps, open mindedness, a quality sorely lacking in many Christian Denominations. There are something like 2,500 Denominations in the US alone. And if they're right and only they will get to Heaven, where does that leave the other 2,499 who believe in the same God? And while we're on the subject, The Scopes Monkey Trial is making another appearance in the US Supreme Court. Who cares HOW He did it? HE DID IT! Sheesh! Some people can't see the forest for the trees.

o

“Tom, I was thinking about starting another planet with life like what you have there on Earth. How should I go about it?”

“Why are You asking me? You’re the smartest being there is.”

“I had problems when I populated the Earth. You live there, any suggestions?”

“Only one. Don’t create snakes or apples, just in case.”

o

It would probably end up being monkeys and oranges, the next time. Why does baptism mean you have to take a bath? You are what you do, not what you say. Anyway, human beings are basically bad. Consider the Great Flood, Sodom and Gomorrah, and finally Christ on the Cross. God has made more treaties with man than one can imagine. In the Bible, they’re called Covenants. The Bible is divided into 2 sections, the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. Except, there was more than one Old Covenant. I think Eve was a blonde, like Anne Heche. They weren’t even good parents, one of their kids killed his brother.

o

“All we have left to pay is the money that I owe to Scotty.”

“And there’s no rush on that?”

“That’s what he said. Still I’ll give him \$100 a month until I’ve paid for the air purifier. Both Scott and Dave have been discussing the subject of firearms with me. They seem to think that I should get me a HK91 and you a HK93. Plus they suggested some pistols, the .45 caliber pistols that the US used for 70 years.”

“I know how to shoot, Daddy taught me.”

“What do you think?”

“They haven’t led you astray so far, maybe you’d better take their advice. We’re going to have a little money left over, why don’t you invest that into the guns?”

“I was thinking the same thing, Dawn, but I didn’t want to do anything unilaterally.”

“Scotty, Don. Look, if it’s ok with you I’ll spend the left over money on those firearms you recommend. I’ll pay you \$100 a month until I’ve repaid you for the LUWA system. You will? Great. How long do you think it will take to get them?”

“Well?”

“He said he’d order them and I could pay him instead of going through the dealer. Something about already having an account with the company. We still have to buy 2 of the pistols and I’ll go apply for a purchase permit. I need to contact some guy in New Jersey to get a package of 10 spare magazines.”

“What are we going to do about food?”

“With what everyone is bringing, I assumed we’d just keep buying the slight excess that we have been. If we buy the really big family packages, and repack them in some plastic pails, the stuff should keep forever.”

“It won’t spoil?”

“I read on Walton Feed that you added oxygen absorbers and sealed the food in Mylar bags. It converted the air inside to almost pure nitrogen. You just have to be sure that the pails have a really tight seal.”

“Won’t the flour get buggy?”

“They don’t recommend storing flour. They suggest that you store whole wheat and use a mill to grind it into flour. I mentioned it to Dave. Jeannie and he already have a grinder.”

“I’m going to start loading up on coffee when it’s on sale. I think if you’re planning on my uncles being here, you’d better stock up on beer.”

“That and pickled eggs.”

o

“This rifle is heavy.”

“9.7 pounds with an empty magazine.”

“It the HK93 lighter?”

“8.4 pounds with an empty magazine. Did you find some pistols?”

“I got a pair of good used M1911s. I also got magazines from Ammoman. Where do I get new barrels and bushings?”

“I have several, one set or two?”

“Two.”

“What do we do about a holster and belt and stuff like that?”

The Family Farm – Chapter 7

“I got a bunch of used stuff at a surplus store the last time I was in Des Moines.”

“I charged them against the transportation account. Sort of made sense, the gear is to transport your pistol and ammo.”

“Anyway, here’s a check for all of the money we can spare. Will that cover the rifles?”

“And then some. I just set up a receivable at the shop. I’ll put this against the balance.”

“Say, where do I get pails to store the food in?”

“How many do you need? I buy them 10 cases at a time and get them for less than \$5 apiece. They come 20 to the case.”

“A case will do for now.”

“I’ll add a case to your account. I’m going to bring all of them here and store the boxes in the storage room. If you need to take another case, just let me know.”

“Everyone brought a 25-pound bag of flour. From what you said, it won’t keep, what do you want to do?”

“I suppose we should put it in pails and add the oxygen absorbers. It will keep long enough for you to use it up. I’ll get some wheat and pack that in pails too so we have an equivalent amount in wheat berries. Then you won’t have to worry about what you use. You were right about that wood burning stove, you really make good bread.”

“It will be time to re-order coal soon.”

“Next paycheck. Scott said they’d be by Saturday and teach us how to use the new rifles. He also has new barrels and bushings for the pistols.”

“Will you need to buy ammo?”

“He didn’t say. We can ask on Saturday. I think he and Dave have a lot already.”

◦

“What’s wrong with your truck?”

“Not a thing, the ammo is heavy. There are the boxes of pails; sorry I didn’t bring them to the store. Let’s get them and the ammo down to the shelter. You’d better get your appliance cart.”

“You didn’t recommend how much ammo I should buy.”

“We have more than enough. When we reorder, you can reimburse what you shoot up and get some more for yourself and Dawn.”

“You were planning on a war?”

“Do you understand economies of scale?”

“The larger the purchase, the lower the cost?”

“Close enough. You see it all the time, \$5 each, 2 for \$9, 3 for \$13, etc. That why we buy an inventory of products all at once, we have carrying charges, but as long as they are less than what we saved on the purchase, we’re money ahead.”

“And the ammo?”

“You’d be surprised how much you can save if you buy 10, 15 or 20 cases of each of the 3 calibers at a time. A typical pallet load of ammo is about ~60 cases. And if you can get a trucker to swing by the supplier, pick it up and deliver it along with your order, shipping is nearly free. Let me give you an example: 2,000 rounds of 5.56×45mm loose packed sells for \$429. The same ammo on stripper clips is \$469 for 1,800-rounds. You buy one or two cases of the stripper ammo and the rest in the loose box. Then as you use up the ammo in the stripper clips, you reload them. We usually just use the loose ammo and use a magazine loader. The stripper clips would come in handy if you were carrying extra ammo in a non-practice situation.”

“What is he lying to you about now?”

“Scott was explaining about ammo prices.”

“That’s his ammo, mine is in my pickup.”

“I get it, he is fighting WW III and you’re fighting WW IV.”

“Did you explain the term mutant zombie bikers to him yet?”

“Didn’t get the chance.”

“What’s a mutant zombie biker?”

“MZBs for short. The term refers to the bad guys, whatever their persuasion. Let’s get real for a moment. What if something, anything, bad happens? Some people aren’t going to be prepared, remember New Orleans? Remember that gun stores were broken into and guns stolen? Then some people stole food and some stole TVs. If you were

hungry and all you had was a loaded gun and none of the stores had any food left, what would you do?"

"Probably take it."

"Some people can't be bothered to check the stores first. And, even if they do, what if the stores are empty? In New Orleans, they were shooting at the police. For a survival-oriented person, you've done very well. Now it's time for Dave and me to teach you about keeping what you have."

"I'm not so sure I could shoot someone."

"What would you do if someone tried to rape Dawn? What would you do if someone messed with the twins? I know the answer so don't bother, Don. The real question is where do you draw the line? What if it were Dave or I in trouble? See what I mean?"

"Yeah."

"To paraphrase something I read at my favorite website, the only difference between a conservative and a liberal is that the liberal hasn't been mugged, yet."

"What's this other stuff, Dave?"

"The grinder and other things that we need for the shelter. You can see what's in the pails because they're labeled with the contents and the date they were packed. The only thing we haven't added to the shelter is the communications gear. Scott uses radios in his business to communicate with the trucks. Those are Motorola CM 300s mobile radio with 32 channel 45w. He also has the 16 channel 5w CP200 hand held radios for when his men are away from their trucks.

"Darn, I forgot to bring the radios."

"Bring them next week, Scott."

"Now that gives us 32 channels in the VHF band. In addition, we can pick up another 120 channels by using SSB CB radios that operate in the 11-meter band. Then, as the real prize we can get a HF/VHF/UHF ham radio which, with a minor modification, would give us millions of frequencies."

"You're way out of my league."

"Did you get the computer repaired?"

"New hard disc drive and a power supply."

"Fine. Did you set it up in the shelter?"

“Not yet, I was waiting to get a table.”

“I bought a computer table a year ago and man, do I ever hate it. It would be perfect as a radio table. As long as you had adequate ventilation, it might hold the computer, monitor and 8 radios. I’ll try to remember to load it on the truck next weekend.”

“Why did you buy a table you hate?”

“Bought it for the Jeannie. It was fine as long as she had it, but I ended up with it and I simply don’t like it. I was far happier when all I had was a 30”x60” table.”

“Thanks, I’ll put it to good use.”

Cobra and Uniden SSB radios were a dime a dozen and you could frequently find one or more by shopping garage sales. Uniden made the Washington base and the Grant mobile. Cobra made the 2010 GTL WX base and the 148 GTL mobile. Galaxy made the model 2547 SSB base station. Dave claimed that the best antenna for the mobile was the Wilson antenna and the Starduster, or a copy, was the best base antenna. Dave thought the Kenwood TS-2000X was probably the best Ham radio, given the budget and all of the frequencies available on that particular radio. They would need a power supply and more for the base station. The TS-2000 without the 1.2GHz module was probably the best all-around mobile ham radio; it was a matter of personal choice. Dave and Scott were choosing so the matter was decided.

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“Hey guys, my battery died. I don’t think it can handle the load with all of the radios.”

“I’d recommend that you put in a second alternator and an extra battery.”

“Forget it, Scott. What Don needs to do is jack up the radiator cap and drive a new pickup underneath.”

“Would that I could. This old Chevy is a classic.”

“It was a classic in 1961, now it’s just old.”

“It’s a ‘51, that’s a classic.”

“How do you manage to keep it running?”

“Tender loving care. And a whole lot of used parts.”

“I have an old truck I was going to junk that is better than that.”

“Yeah, Don, the pickup could be your grandfather’s.”

“If you have something better, I’ll take it. Maybe I can fix it up.”

“It’s a 67 Chevy. I’ll give it to you and if you can get it to run, it’s yours.”

“What about my old pickup?”

“Why don’t you park it in town with a *for sale* sign? There has to be some nut who you give a lot for a pickup with that good of a body.”

“It runs.”

“Walks, it does a mile in 7 minutes.”

o

The ’67 wasn’t in awful shape. It only needed a few things: main bearings, rings, valves tranny rebuild and a little body work. While Scott and Dave saw to equipping the shelter, Don rebuilt the truck. First, he swapped the engine and later the tranny. Next, he added a second alternator and 2 new batteries. The body of the newer truck was in pretty bad shape, rusted out in several places. That was the benefit of living in Iowa, salt on the roads every winter. It was spring by the time he had the truck ready to run. All it needed now was a coat of paint.

“Not bad, it almost looks like a pickup again.”

“If I had a compressor and paint, I’d try to paint it myself, Scott. Nice pickup and it runs all of the radios. I sold the ‘51.”

“How you make out?”

“I got enough to buy a rebuilt engine and tranny.”

“Really, get a 350?”

“Diesel with a matching rebuilt transmission.”

“What kind of engine?”

“I don’t know, it’s a Cummins. A lot more powerful than the engine in the ‘51.”

“Did you have any trouble putting it in?”

“Had to fabricate new motor mounts, is all.”

“The reason I stopped by was to tell you that your account is paid in full. My accountant found an error the bookkeeper made and reduced your balance.”

“Thanks Scott, but that isn’t right. I’m more than willing to pay what I owe. What’s the balance?”

“\$10.”

“I don’t take charity, Scott.”

“Believe me, if you owed more, I’d take it, Don.”

“I was looking at the HK91. Is it capable of full auto?”

“Why would you ask?”

“Just curious.”

“I have the missing parts. Iowa doesn’t permit machineguns. The HK93 is a HK33, just as the HK91 is a G3.”

Note: Internally, the HK91 is identical to the G3. Only the absence of certain parts makes the weapon incapable of full auto fire. You can convert them back, if you want to break several laws. The typical original German HK91 rifle costs more than \$2,000. As I understand it, subject to correction, the same applies to the HK33/HK93. But ask yourself, why you would want a full auto 7.62x51mm caliber assault rifle in a place like Iowa? The weapons didn’t come from Florida, that’s just what Scott told Don. The HK79 grenade launcher will fit on either gun. Neither rifle was capable of full auto.

o

“If you have even a single part to a machinegun, you’re breaking Iowa law.”

“Sue me. Did you install the radios?”

“The Chevy looks like a police car, of course I did.”

“But wait, there’s more.”

“What do you mean more?”

“I have a ham radio for you to mount.”

“Haven’t the 2 of you done enough? The shelter is completely finished; Dawn and I are armed and can and will shoot. We have all 3 underground fuel tanks and both above ground tanks filled. I can’t imagine what else we could use.”

“A chainsaw would be a good start, Don. If TSHTF, you’ll eventually run out of coal.”

“We refilled the coal room. I probably have enough for 2 winters.”

“Ok, but you burn wood in the stove. That old orchard has enough dead trees we could cut down to keep you in firewood for a long time.”

“I’d have to ask Ernest before I could harvest those apple trees.”

“He said that they were mostly all dead anyway and that we should go ahead. I ran into him in town. Anyway, you have some seedlings that are big enough that you’re going to have to clear room for them.”

“Ernest is going to have to clear room for them.”

“Wrong answer, pal. Dave, you and I are going to clear them. I heard that you have a calf.”

“Two, a steer and a heifer. I don’t know why everyone thinks we need charity. We have chickens, too. I was told that when the sows littered, we’d get a barrow and a gilt. All we need to have a complete farm is 40 acres and a mule plus and a couple of saddle horses.”

“Which breed?”

“I don’t ride.”

“Dawn does, her dad told me so.”

“Don’t make waves, a horse costs upward of \$1,000 and that isn’t a fancy horse. If Dawn wants a horse, she can buy one.”

“Fine, whatever. Anyway, you have to mount a dual-band antenna and a HF antenna on the Chevy to handle the radios.”

“Do you like my paint job?”

“I can’t say that I recognize the scheme.”

“Homemade Iowa camouflage.”

“It certainly is different. Have you checked it out?”

“It works best in a cornfield, but it’s quite effective.”

“Everything you need to mount the ham radio is in the box, including both antennas.”

“Oh, I finally got all of the equipment set up on Dave’s computer table. It actually worked out well. I studied and got my technicians license. We didn’t get our call signs yet, but Dawn and I passed the test. Do you know anything about the Remington M-24 SWS?”

“It’s built on the Remington model 700 long action. Bolt action with a 5 shot magazine and I believe it’s available in two calibers. Awfully expensive.”

“I figured as much.”

“Were you thinking about getting one?”

“No, I was shopping on the Internet. Just curious.”

“Are you planning on a garden this year?”

“We’re going to plant green beans, cucumbers, onions and potatoes. Dawn and I will try our hand at canning pickles and green beans. The potatoes should be ok in the shelter; it isn’t heated unless it’s occupied. When are you going to order ammo again?”

“Later in the year when he has one of those out-the-door sales. What do you want?”

“Whatever you’d get if you were buying for yourself. Would that be 5 cases per weapon?”

“Only the rifles. I can’t see you having more than 2,000 rounds per pistol. Your buckshot and slugs are in the back of the pickup. Why don’t you don’t you take them into the house and I’ll fish around for the invoice.”

“It’s nice to be paying cash again. Do you think I should get Dawn a shotgun?”

“You could, but I can’t see why you’d want more than one shotgun. She can probably handle your 12-gauge with the low recoil shells. You might want to get a couple of the Motorola CP200’s if you have the money. Other than that, you could start buying pre-65 silver coins or some gold Eagles. At current market prices, the pre-65 coins are about 5 times face. Did you get spare parts for your Chevy?”

“I have extra belts, hoses, fuses plus plenty of oil and filters. What else would I need?”

“Spare glow plugs, air filters, fuel filters, and maybe an auxiliary fuel tank. Because you don’t have 4WD, you should probably have a set of chains.”

“Dawn’s car is on its last legs and I was thinking diesel. The Jetta Wagon isn’t a bad looking small car and it’s available as a diesel. They get up to 44 miles per gallon.”

“What about your gas tank?”

“Stabilized it and I am keeping it for that chainsaw.”

“Did you have any trouble burning the biodiesel in your Chevy?”

“I replaced the fuel line and cleaned out the fuel tank. I’d heard that biodiesel cleaned an engine and you were better off using it in a new vehicle as opposed to an old vehicle. I think that Ralph told me. So rather than clog up the system, I essentially started out with a clean fuel system. I haven’t had a bit of trouble.”

“I guess were ready.”

“I guess.”

“Jeannie is pregnant again. You know, it won’t be all that long before Jimmy is out of a crib. Maybe I should get 4 more bunk beds and store them and the mattresses in the storeroom. Have you figured out the TS-2000?”

“Been listening some nights. Since I don’t have a call sign, I haven’t done anything to set up the frequencies in the memory.”

“Dave and I have a list; I’ll try to remember to bring a copy.”

“Thanks. How old should a kid be before you get them a puppy?”

“What kind of a dog were you thinking about?”

“A German Shepherd. Obedience trained and house broken.”

“Get them a puppy. You can housebreak it yourself and when it gets older, you can get the obedience training. Whatever you do, don’t keep the dog on a chain, that could make it mean.”

o

In a state like Iowa, you don’t have to look very hard to find a German Shepherd puppy. It probably won’t have papers and there may be some question as to its lineage, but if you watch the want ads, you’ll find one. Don found a male and by golly it looked like a German Shepherd. The puppy wanted to play and the kids were just toddlers, a little over a year old. You know who got to train Fritz, right? Dawn. There was a definite upside to having hardwood floors sealed with Varathane. Dawn had started to braid a rug for the living room. She had a 4’ circle, but her goal was a 12’ circle. Maybe by the time she had the rug done, they’d be able to afford new living room furniture.

Don and Dawn realized that Scott and Dave helping them out came with a price, sharing the shelter. However, that was a very small price and without their friends help, they still be remodeling and Don might, or might not, still be working 2 jobs. Don knew that he was being groomed to eventually become a store manager and he also knew that he wasn't willing to move to take over a store.

Getting 1-year old toddlers a puppy has another downside. The kids will be in their early teens when the dog gets old and dies. There is more to teaching children about life than what they teach in schools. Ernest sent the vet out to inseminate the gilt when she old enough and the heifer when she was old enough. He told Don that he wanted a couple of the pigs to butcher when they were old enough.

"We need a freezer in the shelter. Dave has been checking around getting exterior dimensions. I think we're stuck with buying an upright."

"Won't a chest type fit in the tunnel?"

"That isn't the problem, turning the corners is."

"When my steer gets big enough to butcher, I can have it and some of the hogs butchered to stock it. Ernest and Mary brought out a mess of pullets and told us they expected eggs and chicken in exchange."

"How's that working out?"

"What? Ernest supplying the livestock and expecting meat in exchange? Ok, I guess, I'm finding out how much work it is to be a farmer. I don't know if it's worth it or not. I guess I shouldn't complain. I muck out the stalls and pile the manure. The guy who rents the land from Ernest picks it up and spread it on the fields. This has turned into a family affair. Ralph and Ben brought over hay and straw. They supplied the grain to the elevator and Ernest paid to have it ground into feed. John lives in town along with Ernest. I guess that's how families operate. I won't have any hogs to market; Ernest has divided up the meat among the family. Ralph and Ben said they'd each put up a calf next year and I could fatten them to butcher."

The Family Farm – Chapter 8

“It’s working out, isn’t it? Having the livestock cut your food bills a little and once you butcher, it will eliminate your biggest expense, meat.”

“That darned weather radio went off the other night with the tornado watch. Why did you have to get the ones with sirens?”

“Woke you up didn’t it?”

“Me, Dawn, the kids and Fritz.”

“Now you know that it works. Did you put in for a deer license this year?”

“Should I?”

“There’s a nice herd of deer in those woods at the back of the farm.”

“I don’t believe I need one, I should qualify under the landowner/tenant exemption. Ernest didn’t rent out the pasture this year so the livestock would have a place to graze. I rented it for a dollar, just to make it legal.”

“Do you think he’d mind if we hunted there?”

“Ask him. Now that you know him, I’d imagine he’d say yes.

“If you’re the tenant, can’t you give permission?”

“I’d rather not push the issue.”

o

“Don’t I care if they hunt, why didn’t you just give them permission?”

“Ernest, it isn’t my land. I didn’t think it would be right for me to speak for you.”

“Are you planning on hunting?”

“I thought I would, as a tenant.”

“Mary and I wouldn’t mind a couple of venison steaks.”

“If I can get a deer with my shotgun.”

“I always used a .30-30.”

“But Iowa is shotgun only.”

“On a deer-hunting license. You have that fancy military rifle use it. Listen we’ve been talking again, did you ever think of becoming a farmer?”

“I’m a city boy.”

“I know that it usually works the other way around, but we were thinking that if you worked at it, you could learn. Interested?”

“I guess it wouldn’t be any worse than having 2 jobs.”

“That’s the spirit. Listen, keep the gilts and we’ll get them bred. That will give you a herd of hogs. You already have chickens and you can buy pullets come spring. Everyone decided to sell you their calves in the spring and that would grow into enough cattle for this 160. You have to make do for a while using Ralph and Ben’s equipment but we’ll keep our eye out for farm sales and front you. That is, if you’re interested.”

“I’ll have to discuss this with Dawn.”

“I expected that. A lot of young fellas get started with a piece of rented land and working in town. They do the farm work during the evenings and on weekends. We’ll be around to offer suggestions and maybe even a little help. I want to keep this farm in the family.”

o

“But, Dawn, I’m not a farmer.”

“Neither is any other person when they’re born. You’re old enough to be able to learn when they explain something to you. It won’t take you long to learn to farm. If I know my uncles, they’ll do most of the work the first year, and you’ll just have to cultivate. They’ll probably start you in on real farming when it comes time to harvest. We can grow corn, alfalfa, soybeans and some oats. You know about crop rotation, don’t you?”

“Some, but not a lot.”

“Some plants put nitrogen in the soil and some remove it. By rotating your crops and fertilizing with manure, you can get respectable yields for all of the crops.”

“I know about the nitrogen from the store.”

“You probably know more than you think.”

“Are you ok with being a farmer’s wife?”

“I will be, when that’s really the case.”

◦

“Can you see me as a farmer, Dave?”

“You work at Tractor Supply, so you sell the stuff. Now you’re going to learn to use it. Sure, why not? Scott and I’ll be out the first morning of deer season. We’re going to use our rifles.”

“You’re G3s?”

“No, our Winchesters, we should be done hunting in time for lunch.”

“What do you have?”

“Winchester model 70 Featherweight Classics in 7.62×51mm.”

“Scoped?”

“Leopold variable power scopes. You asked about the Remington M-24 SWS. Don, you don’t need that kind of rifle. However, you could get a model 700 ADL or a Winchester. If you get them in 7.62×51mm, you can shoot the surplus in the rifles.”

“I wouldn’t want AP for hunting.”

“Of course not, we prefer the 180-grain Silvertip, it’s cheaper than the 150 or 168-grain. But you could use it to practice, we do.”

“I’ll have to think about a new rifle next year. This year I’ll use the HK91.”

“That should be good enough, for now.”

◦

Don never looked a gift horse in the mouth. He was young and didn’t realize that family and friends were manipulating him. Not that that was bad, far from it. He lacked direction when he graduated from high school, a common failing. Most kids go to college and hopefully mature during the time they’re at school. Iowa has about 140 colleges, including the area colleges. It doesn’t take a college education to sell tractor parts or farm. Over the years, the character of farming in Iowa has changed. In bygone years, they rotated crops and used manure. In current times, they use anhydrous and hybrid seed corn. It greatly improves the yields, but in a classic sense, it isn’t farming.

Scott and Dave had a substantial investment in Don and Dawn’s shelter. They could have built their own, but there is security in numbers. It’s also pretty hard to grow crops

in your backyard. Do you recall what Don said when the subject of horses came up? *If Dawn wants a horse, she can buy one.*

If Don was willing to try and learn to farm, Dawn wanted horses. Good-hearted Uncle Ralph had horses and he was especially fond of his niece, Dawn. He sold her 2 horses and threw in the tack. He told her she could pay him back out of her household allowance and not to worry about it. Ralph needed the money like he needed a hole in the head; he farmed a full section, 640 acres. Plus he served on the board of the Co-op and was on the School Board. He was what some refer to as a prominent citizen. The upside of being prominent is the amount of influence a person has. Think big. Think in terms of being able to buy pure biodiesel for \$1 a gallon. Money can't buy happiness, but it beats the heck out of whatever is in second place.

o

"What do you want for your birthday?"

"How much do you have to spend?"

"Whatever, Don. What do you want?"

"Did you see the rifles that Scott and Dave had? I wouldn't mind having one of those."

"Birthdays are \$25 gifts, not \$800 gifts."

"There's Christmas. By the way, what would you like for Christmas?"

"Jeans and western-cut blouses. You could get me a new dress for church."

"How about I get the stuff I know you will like and a gift certificate for a dress? Or, if you'd prefer, I can take you shopping just before Christmas."

"I'd prefer to shop the day after Christmas, if you don't mind; but if you want to take me, I'll talk to Jeannie about babysitting the kids."

"We'll go after church."

"Let's go to Cedar Rapids, they usually have a better selection."

"Sure. Hey look, Dave is pulling in and has something on the back of his truck."

"What do you have?"

"A freezer for the shelter, a 21 ft³ upright. I measured and we can't get the chest down the ramp."

“But Scott already brought a freezer.”

“I know, now we have 2. Have you stopped to think how much 22 people would eat in a year?”

“Why a year?”

“I thought you said that you planned on putting up enough food for your family for a year.”

“I did, and I have. Why 22 people for a year?”

“Iran tested a nuclear weapon yesterday.”

“It was probably the only one they had. Listen, Iran is already under UN sanctions. Pakistan and India have more weapons than the Iranians could even conceive of having.”

“How many nukes does it take to blow up New York City?”

“I have no idea.”

“One properly placed nuclear weapon say in a cargo container, could do a lot of damage.”

“Let me help you unload it. I’ll get the appliance cart.”

“When did you get horses?”

“I didn’t, Dawn got a couple from Ralph.”

“Where are the mules?”

“I don’t have any.”

“Yet you mean.”

“Right, I don’t have any yet. Can you imagine farming 160 acres with a pair of mules?”

“It can be done, dawn to dusk 6 days a week.”

“Oh no, dawn to midnight, 7 days a week, I work in Fairfield.”

“You’re going to look cute in bib overalls.”

“Watch the corner, I don’t want the new walls all dinged up.”

“Hi, Dave, the bread is rising and the pork and beef roasts are thawing.”

When the house was built, the stairs to the basement were outside. When Ernest moved in, he enclosed the porch and added the stairs to the basement from the enclosed porch. There weren't any new walls to ding up. They manhandled the freezer down the stairs and down the ramp. It went into the storeroom next to Scott's freezer. Don knew that Scott didn't have a freezer at home because when they went shopping, they brought meat for the freezer and took what they needed for the next week or two.

“Are you going to be cycling food in and out of this freezer, or do you have another at home, Dave?”

“Jeannie and I will be doing the same as Scott and Marilyn. I bought a side from Ralph and when the locker plant has it processed, I'll bring it out.”

o

“When are you due?”

“About a month.”

“I almost switched to chicken. Remember the first time I fixed a beef and pork roast together for the two of you?”

“I had James. I never did get to taste that particular roast.”

“Look, Scott just pulled in.”

“Did he bring a freezer too?”

“I don't see one, but he's carrying a small package.”

“Hey, bro, what up?”

“Dawn called and said it was beef and pork roast tonight with homemade bread.”

“What's that in your hand?”

“Maps for the computer in the shelter.”

“What kind of maps?”

“There are 2 sets, topographical and road maps. They cover the entire US.”

“Want a beer?”

"I can help myself. If you kids take anything out of that toy box, you be sure to put it away."

"I don't think they heard you."

"Selective hearing. They heard, but will claim they didn't."

"Which deer was the biggest?"

"Yours. It beat mine by about 10 pounds and Dave's by about 20 pounds."

"I didn't think there was much difference in the size."

"The venison should be ready by the time they have the beef cut and wrapped. You don't have a freezer do you?"

"No, I asked Dawn for a Winchester for Christmas and thought that besides the personal gifts, I'd use it as an excuse to buy a freezer."

"Buddy, that only works if you get her enough of the personal gifts. Ask for the model 70 featherweight?"

"Well, I told her that I wanted the same rifle that the two of you had."

"This is going to be an expensive Christmas for you."

"They've all been expensive. I learned about the personal gifts our first Christmas. I was working 2 jobs and we were still paying off the wedding so there wasn't a lot of money to spend. I think the secret is to put each gift in a separate package. You know, the more you earn the more you spend. It's really hard to get ahead."

"Have you been buying pre-65 silver?"

"I have a few rolls of dimes. They're about 5 times face, just like you said."

"You'd better move up to quarters. I know it probably seems stupid to tie up a lot of your spare cash in old coins, but if there is every a real serious problem in the country, you might be grateful you have them. You heard about Iran?"

"Dave mentioned it. I thought that North Korean had more bombs than Iran."

"They claimed to have 3, but several reports said that they had 7. I suspect they got triggers from the Russians or the Chinese."

"If I were to bet, I'd bet on the Chinese."

“Maybe you’re right, Dave. I find it ironic that the Chinese are helping North Korea to build nuclear weapons and are the principal negotiator in getting them to disarm.”

“Bush will never give them that light water reactor.”

“Kim doesn’t want to agree with anything, I believe that it’s all just a smoke screen.”

“Who is the enemy? North Korea, Iran, the Chinese or the Russians?”

“That’s most of them, Don. You can add France to your list. And if it were up to me, I’d add Saudi Arabia.”

“I thought France was a member of NATO.”

“They were a founding member, but France withdrew from the integrated command of NATO and all NATO forces left France in 1966.”

“Wasn’t that about the time that Franco American relations went to pot?”

“I think the French thought we owed them for them helping us in the Revolutionary War.”

“We should stamp that invoice, *Paid-in-Full*.”

“I believe that maybe the President did.”

“I read somewhere that they’re considering doing away with NATO. France doesn’t participate and Norway has a very low opinion of NATO.”

“I have a loaf of hot French bread just out of the oven if you guys want a slice.”

“I’ll go for that. I hate discussing politics.”

◦

“How does she do that?”

“Do what?”

“Get such good bread?”

“I think that’s a benefit from using a wood stove. You know, we never harvested those apple trees and I getting a little low on wood. Want to help me this weekend?”

“We’ll each bring out chainsaws and all 3 of us can cut wood. I’ll borrow a splitter and we can do what splitting there is to do.”

“It’s going to take more than one weekend.”

“I know, but with the 3 of us working on it, we might be done by the first of the year. Do you know how many trees there are in the old orchard?”

“About 40. I think it will take until spring to cut them all down.”

“Yeah and we have to be careful of the new trees.”

“The old ones aren’t completely dead; some still produce a little fruit. Dawn canned applesauce this year. I marked the trees that didn’t produce any fruit. Maybe we should leave the others for later.”

“That might be a good idea; I didn’t realize that there were that many trees.”

“How many do you want to cut?”

“Ten should be more than enough. If we plan on taking 10 trees a year, we’ll have ample time and you’ll be gaining more firewood each year as we go.”

“If the meat is ready tomorrow, I’ll bring it from the locker.”

o

“I thought that we’d get more than one tree done a day.”

“These are large trees; I’d guess that they’re over 100 years old. I know that Johnny Appleseed didn’t get to Iowa, but these trees could be some of the seedlings he sent west with pioneers.”

“That would make them closer to 150 years old, wouldn’t it?”

“When did he die?”

“Before the Civil War, maybe 1845.”

“History buff?”

“Anal retentive teacher.”

“Do you want to just cut this tree into logs and do the remainder of the cutting up at the farmstead?”

“That might be the best approach. Ralph left that old Ford NAA in the machine shed. It should be able to pull the logs; it has a 3 point hitch.”

“Do you have a chain?”

“In the machine shed. What are you thinking?”

“Lower the drawbar, attach the trunk with the chain and raise the drawbar. You’ll only have one point of contact with the ground. You go get the tractor and chain and Dave and I’ll keep trimming.”

“Could you make us a thermos of coffee, Dawn? We got one tree down and we’re going to drag it back to the house. I don’t believe we’re going to be able to cut more than one tree a day.”

“How much firewood is there in that tree?”

“Maybe as much as 3 cords, I won’t really know until its cut up. The trees are all about the same size so once I measure this tree we’ll have a pretty good idea how much firewood is in the orchard.”

“You’re not cutting the live trees are you?”

“Not this year or next, no.”

o

“I put down a tarp so we would have a dry place to stack the wood. How much of the tree will we be able to use?”

“I’d say just to take anything bigger than an inch and burn the rest. The twigs are more work than they’re worth. We’ll help you chain the log and keep trimming. By the time you get back, we should have the larger limbs cut.”

“Dawn sent a thermos of coffee.”

“Anyone have any idea what the temperature is?”

“It’s just above freezing.”

“Back the tractor up to the trunk and lower the draw bar.”

“Which end?”

“The top. If you tried to pick up the bottom, it would pull your front wheels off the ground.”

“I have front end weights.”

“I saw, but they aren’t enough for you to pick up the bottom.”

“Ok, whatever you say.”

The Family Farm – Chapter 9

As it was, the tree almost lifted the front of the NAA Ford tractor off the ground. Don took his time pulling the big log to the house. While he was hauling, Dave and Scott gathered the large branches into a pile so Don could take them next. Smaller limbs and branches went into the 2 pickups, to be unloaded later. They piled the small stuff in a burn pile. Late in the day, they drove the pickups to the house and unloaded the limbs. There was nothing large enough to require the tractor so they took the 3 pickups back and finished loading the last of the tree.

“I could use a beer.”

“Miller’s in the refrigerator and the other kinds are in the shelter.”

“Miller’s is fine. What do you think 3 cords?”

“That what I guessed. If the guess is accurate, we have 120 cords of firewood in the orchard.”

“Do you want to drop another tree tomorrow or cut and split the wood?”

“There is a storm forecast for next week. Maybe we’d better skip church and drop a second tree. If we get a storm, we can cut and split next weekend.”

“Man; that was more work than I imagined.”

“It was a big tree. How long can you keep the splitter?”

“As long as we need it, he only does firewood in early November.”

“I was just thinking about how much splitting this is going to be. It’s a good thing you borrowed the splitter.”

“Tomorrow, maybe you should fill the bucket of the loader with rocks or something, your front wheels were only on the ground part of the time.”

“I don’t have any rocks. I’ll get up early and cut off a couple of pieces from the trunk of the tree.”

“Might not be enough weight. I’ll check around the shop tonight and see what I can find.”

o

“We’ll put that cast iron in your bucket. That should counter balance the trunk of the tree very well. I see you got the trunk cut up.”

"I made 7 cuts and got those 8 16" pieces to split. I was up before dawn."

"Dawn the morning or Dawn the wife?"

"Both."

"By next weekend, you'll have the both trees cut and ready to split. Maybe we can cut a tree on Saturday and split wood on Sunday afternoon. We should have all 10 trees down by sometime in February."

"Weather permitting. Sure, that way we won't need to take off any more Sundays from church."

"How about we take some of the smaller logs for our fireplaces?"

"Help yourself. I'll drive the tractor down and save a trip. See you at the orchard."

"Man, you're making short work of the branches on this one."

"Practice makes perfect, Don. Why don't you help Dave trim the branches while I finish delimiting the tree?"

When Dave and Don had a large pile of branches, Don hooked on to them with the tractor and pulled them to the house. Dawn was waiting with a thermos of coffee. She told Don they were having chicken for supper. She also told him that she had lunch meat for sandwiches and when they got to a breaking point around noon, they should come up for lunch.

o

Don was about 5'10 and weighed about 150 pounds, by now, most of it muscle. He had dark brown hair and heavy eyebrows. By contrast, Dawn was about 5'6" and maybe weighed 115 pounds soaking wet. After she'd had the twins, she's gone nuts dieting trying to get her figure back. It had been a struggle, but she'd finally achieved her goal. Her mother, June, tend toward the chubby side and Dawn didn't want the look. As with many women, having a baby improved her figure, from a B to a C. She was fair with shoulder length brunette hair and a light complexion.

Scott went 6'2 and about 190 pounds. He had blonde hair and a receding hairline. He was 29 years old. Marilyn was also a blonde, but not a movie blonde. She had been Valedictorian of her graduating class. Her figure was more modest and she was taller, about 5'9. Possibly 135 pounds, but she had been dieting too. She wouldn't be able to get a figure like Dawn's not matter how hard she tried, her age, 28, was against her.

Jeannie was about 5'7 and perhaps 140 pounds. She too was a brunette. She was in the 9th month of her pregnancy. Before she'd gotten pregnant the second time, her fig-

ure rivaled Dawn's and she weight about 127. When the two of them went out for lunch, they split a salad. Dave was just 6' tall and maybe between 175 and 180. He worked out when he had the time and had a 17" collar and a lot of upper body mass. Dave's hair was a very light brown and he hadn't started to lose any of it. Scott took after their father and he their mother as hair color went. Dave and Jeannie were 26 and high school sweethearts.

Scott and Norma, their parents, lived in Fairfield. She worked for the City and he was a welder. Age wise, Scott and Norma were on a par with the youngest of the 4 brothers, John. John and June had married later and that's why Dawn was younger than Scott and Dave.

o

"That tasted like homemade bread, but it didn't look like homemade bread. It looked more like a loaf of regular bread. How did you do that?"

"It's in the ingredients you use and I have a slicer. Just because a person bakes at home doesn't mean that the loaves have to be hand sliced. The French bread is a difference recipe and that's why it has a coarse texture."

"Don't eat too much Scott, you'll get sleepy. We still have to drop the trunk and finish loading the branches in the pickups."

"Let's get that done, I'm tired."

"Southern fried chicken for supper."

"I was going to suggest we go home after we got done. I guess I was wrong. What is there to go with it?"

"Marilyn made potato salad."

"Picnic?"

"Not in the snow."

o

"Are you sure you have all of the branches you want?"

"We can always come here for more. Let's go watch the news."

Pentagon sources said that the blast was on an uninhabited island in the northern Pacific. They declined to speculate who detonated the bomb. Senator Ted Kennedy suggested that it might have been North Korea. As you may recall, North Korea once again

broke off the six nation talks concerning their elimination of their nuclear program. The President's speech outlined steps being taken to disarm North Korea once again referred to the country as a member of the Axis of Evil.

“Turn that darned thing off. That’s the news; everything from now on will be pure speculation. They’ll have 6 different experts give 6 different opinions of what it all means. And then, they’ll have a panel argue among themselves.”

“Fox and CNN are just as bad.”

“The media as a whole stinks. What ever happened to people like Edward R. Morrow?”

“They all died. What did you expect after that speech that the President gave? I’d guess it was either North Korea or China and it was intended to suggest that North Korea has successfully tested a nuclear weapon.”

“If it was North Korea, that would suggest that there are 10 members of the nuclear club, the US, Russia, China, France, Israel, the UK, India, Pakistan, Iran and North Korea.”

“Eleven. Recent news surfaced that due to a clerical error, Ukraine may still possess several hundred warheads which were not accounted for in the armaments repatriation move in the 1990s. In any case, even if Ukraine does possess weapons, they are technically missing and not in a deployed state or any part of Ukraine's defense posture.”

“If they’re not deployed, then it’s still 10.”

“Right with North Korea, Iran, Pakistan, India, Israel and China being the countries’ most likely to use them.”

“Israel denies having any nuclear weapons.”

“It doesn’t matter whether they admit having them or not. All it would take is for Iran to mount a nuke on one of those missiles they got from North Korea or China, or wherever and shoot it towards the Israelis. I’d imagine that the Israeli nuclear weapons are like our B-61s and capable of being delivered by those F-15s they have. If that were the case, Israel would probably nuke Iran and while they were at it, hit Syria. They might or might not bomb Jordan. I would guess that Saudi Arabia might be hit because they fund al Qaeda. I doubt they’d hit Iraq since we still have troops there.”

“I hope not.”

“Me too. So where do North Korea, China, Pakistan and India fit into this scenario of yours, Scott?”

“North Korea might take the opportunity to nuke either South Korea or Japan, my money is on Japan. India and Pakistan have been fighting over the Kashmir since who knows when? They’re going to get radiation if the Israelis nuke Iran, so why not?”

“Fine, but where does China fit into the scenario?”

“The Kashmir region is currently divided amongst three countries: Pakistan controls the northwest portion, India controls the central and southern portion and the China has occupied the northeastern portion. Though these regions are in practice administered by their respective claimants, India has never formally recognized the accession of the areas claimed by Pakistan and China. Pakistan views the entire Kashmir region as disputed territory, and does not consider India's claim to it to be valid. An option favored by many Kashmiris is independence, but both Pakistan and India are against this.”

“So you’re saying that China has a stake in the Kashmir?”

“Exactly.”

“Crap. There is nothing that we can do about any of those things.”

“We’ve already done all that we can do, guys, we’re prepared. Most of the people in this country are sitting on their behinds hoping that nothing happens. We are nearly totally ready. I have a shipment of ammo coming in tomorrow on a truck with plumbing fixtures from the east coast. We have the meat from the locker plant and the freezers are full.”

“I think maybe we’ll do our Christmas shopping tomorrow night. She can buy me the Winchester and scope and I’ll buy her the clothes and freezer. How long does the locker plant take to process a steer?”

“About a week.”

“I haul that steer in tomorrow morning and have it butchered. I have some hogs I can butcher too. This might be a good time to have that freezer and have it full.”

“Ask the locker plant to double wrap the meat, once in plastic and a second time in Kraft paper. That should do a good job of preventing freezer burn. They only do it if you ask.”

“How much room do we have for chickens?”

“How many do you have?”

“About 150 we can butcher. The rest are laying hens.”

“That sounds like an all-day or an all-weekend job. We have enough wood for now; we can butcher chickens next weekend. I think between the 3 freezers, we have enough

room for the chickens. If we don't, I'll buy another freezer. Don, if you want, I'll buy the freezer and you can repay me. You'll save 20%."

"I forgot. Sure, thanks."

o

"Why tomorrow night?"

"Scott, Dave and I got into a discussion after that piece on the news. I had planned on getting you the clothes you wanted and a freezer. Plenty of clothes believe me. Scott outlined a possible scenario where the World could end up in another war. It might be a remote possibility, but I thought I might buy our Christmas presents early. Look at it this way, I'll be there to help you pick out your dress and you won't have to wait. It might be a good time if you've decided to get me the Winchester to make the purchase. We can take the time to pick up the clothes, toys and games we picked out for the kids."

"You're talking about a nuclear war with missiles and bombs?"

"Seems unlikely, doesn't it?"

"Once it seemed unlikely I'd ever get pregnant and we have twins. That's what you were getting me for Christmas, a freezer?"

"Think of it as more of a house gift. I saw some nice looking blouses in some of the stores. I also saw a red dress I thought you might look nice in."

"A red dress for church? Not on your life."

"You can try it on can't you?"

"Sure but I won't count it as my church going dress and you promised me a new dress to wear to church."

"And jeans and blouses, I know what I promised."

"Where do you want to go?"

"Cedar Rapids, they have a better selection, right? We can stop in Fairfield on the way and try on the red dress."

"I'll take the hogs and steer to the locker plant tomorrow. I'll get off early and see you around 4. Call your mother and see if she can watch the twins."

"I call her right now. What should I tell her if she starts to ask questions?"

“Tell her the truth; we’re going to Cedar Rapids Christmas shopping.”

“What about a possible war?”

“Your dad watches TV, I’m sure he already knows.”

o

“When are you going to get the freezer?”

“Scott is picking it up so we can get the 20% discount.”

“Let’s go try on the red dress.”

It was the perfect choice. Don knew he should have just bought it and surprised Dawn. This way she had a chance up front to approve or disapprove.

“Do you like it?”

“Why don’t you wear it?”

“It isn’t too dressy?”

“I wore a sport coat, you really look nice.”

“But only because you asked. I like it.”

Ninety minutes later they were in Cedar Rapids, shopping. Dawn picked out 3 pairs of lady wranglers and 6 blouses. She also picked out a nice grey wool dress to wear to church. Then bought the cowboy boots and the hat. Finally, they went looking for the rifle. The dealer said he’d have to order it but could have it by the following Saturday. The scope would be mounted and sighted in using his Aim Shot laser bore sight cartridge. They returned to Fairfield picked up the kids and return to the farm. After the kids were down, Don put in a CD. They danced while the music played.

*I've never seen you looking so lovely as you did tonight
I've never seen you shine so bright
I've never seen so many men ask you if you wanted to dance
They're looking for a little romance
Given half a chance
And I've never seen that dress you're wearing
Or that highlights in your hair
That catch your eyes
I have been blind*

The lady in red is dancing with me

*Cheek to cheek
There's nobody here
It's just you and me
It's where I wanna be
But I hardly know this beauty by my side
I'll never forget the way you look tonight*

*I've never seen you looking so gorgeous as you did tonight
I've never seen you shine so bright you were amazing
I've never seen so many people want to be there by your side
And when you turned to me and smiled it took my breath away
And I have never had such a feeling such a feeling
Of complete and utter love, as I do tonight*

*The lady in red is dancing with me
Cheek to cheek
There's nobody here
It's just you and me
It's where I wanna be
But I hardly know this beauty by my side
I'll never forget the way you look tonight*

*I never will forget the way you look tonight
The lady in red
My lady in red
I love you*

Chris de Burgh wrote *The Lady in Red*. *The Lady In Red* has won six annual ASCAP (Association of Composers & Publishers) Awards, presented to acknowledge the record as one of the Top 20 most played songs in America during a 12-month period. During October 2000, Chris was invited to New York to receive a rare honor from the American-Irish Chamber of Commerce in recognition of his significant contribution to that community. According to de Burgh, the real answer is that is that this song was inspired by a moment when Chris saw Diane across a crowded nightclub, without at first realizing it was her. As a result he realized that often people never quite appreciate that the most important person in their lives is taken for granted, and how after a while you fail to notice the things that brought you together.

“Let’s go to bed.”

“It has been a long day.”

“That’s not what I meant.”

“They don’t know that.”

The firewood would have to wait. Don cut wood every night and by the time the weekend came he had it all cut up. First they had to do the chickens. It took until Sunday night to finish up, taking out time for church on Sunday morning. On Monday after work, Don drove back to Cedar Rapids to pick up the Winchester. He treated himself to a hard shell gun case, a Pelican P-1750, expensive at half the price. Don had picked up the meat from the locker plant on Saturday. If you were someone who intended, for whatever reason to attack the United States, when would you do it? Whoever they were did it the following week on Sunday morning at 9am PST. Services had just started at the United Methodist Church.

o

“I’m sorry; I’m going to have to stop the service. According to the television, the US is under attack. We have incoming missiles and they should hit in about 25 minutes. If you don’t have a basement, you’re welcome to stay here. The remainder of you should go NOW.”

“Don, June and I will be there in a bit; I have to stop by the house.”

“We’ll leave the blast door unlatched.”

“Use your cell phone to call Scott and Marilyn. He said he’d leave it on vibrate.”

“Scott, Dawn. Did you hear? Ok, the blast door will be open.”

“They’re on their way, Don. They got the announcement before their church service started. Are we at war?”

“I’d guess that the US has already retaliated by now.”

“How long will...”

“We be in the shelter? Probably 2 weeks. There aren’t many targets in Iowa; we should be able to move the stuff in the kitchen down to the shelter. I’ll move the kids’ stuff to the shelter and you stay there with them. It won’t take me that long to empty the kitchen. I’ll yank the radios and put them in the shelter.”

“Who attacked?”

“I’ve been busy moving things to the shelter, I have no idea. Dawn has the TV on in the shelter.”

“Did you pull your radios?”

“They’re in the shelter. Most of the family is here already. They were in church and came straight here. John had to stop by the house. Where are your parents?”

“They went to Chicago for the weekend.”

John and June scurried in. John was carrying his guns in cases. June had a wastebasket full of documents. That was everyone except Scott and Dave’s parents. There was nothing to indicate an attack had taken place until KGAN-TV went off the air. (KGAN used to be WMT.) I know that you recall that Jeannie was pregnant. She was also overdue.

“You picked a heck of a time to have a baby.”

“I just did it so you could include some excitement in your memoirs. I had my first contraction about the time the minister announced that the US was being attacked.”

“Does anyone know how to deliver a baby?”

“Go make some coffee and we’ll do it.”

“Ok, mom.”

“John, do you want to put your guns in the gun cabinet? I really don’t think that we’ll need them for a while.”

“You do it Don, I’m getting a beer.”

“I’ll take coffee, Dawn. Could you make it in the Mr. Coffee and pour it into the urn to stay warm?”

“I might as well. Is there anything on the radio?”

“It’s still the EAS.”

“It’s been long enough that they should have moved to local news.”

“Channel 2 is off the air and all the radio has is the Emergency Alert Notification. Que sera, sera.”

“What the name of the movie you put on TV?”

“*Dr. Strangelove.*”

“Is that appropriate?”

The Family Farm – Chapter 10

“I can put on *Fail Safe* or *The Day After*.”

“Anything else?”

“*Threads*? *The War Game*?”

“Forget it, they’re laughing.”

“It’s a comedy.”

◦

Threads (1984) and *The War Game* (1965) are English films that recount events after the Russians attack England. The former covers the 10-year period after the Russians attack Sheffield and the latter the effects of an attack on a rural area of England. *Dr. Strangelove* (1961) is a Peter Seller’s comedy. *Fail Safe* was originally released in 1964 and was remade and shown again in 2000. The movie was performed on live television in black and white and required two sound stages on the Warner Brothers studio lot. *The Day After* was a 2-part, 4-hour presentation on ABC in 1983, set in Kansas.

Don turned on the CD V-717, remote survey meter. It didn’t record any fallout for about a day. They presumed that whoever attacked the country had detonated a nuke in the Omaha area, probably at Offutt AFB. In its 2005 BRAC Recommendations, DOD recommended closing Pittsburgh International Airport (IAP) Air Reserve Station (ARS) and relocate all remaining Pittsburgh ECS and headquarters manpower to Offutt AFB, NE.

Offutt Air Force Base is home to the United States Air Force’s premiere reconnaissance and command-and-control operations. Among the base’s numerous and diverse units and missions, all branches of the US armed forces are represented in a workforce that exceeds 10,000 military and civilian personnel. The base’s fleet of RC-135, OC-135, and WC-135 aircraft are in constant demand around the world to provide global situational awareness to military leaders and government officials. Additionally, its E-4B aircraft provide transport and command and control for the President, the Secretary of Defense, and Secretary of State.

Air Force Weather Agency is a field-operating agency of the Headquarters US Air Force Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Air and Space Operations, Weather Directorate (AF/XOW). Each day, AFWA builds the world’s most comprehensive weather database to provide forecast products to Air Force and Army war fighters, the National Command Authorities, base and post weather stations, the National Reconnaissance Office, and others. It was formed October 15, 1997, and is located at Offutt Air Force Base.

The 132d Fighter Wing is located at the Des Moines International Airport. The 185th Fighter Wing (FW) of the Iowa Air National Guard (IANG) occupies 287 acres on the

southeast side of the Sioux Gateway Airport, located approximately 10 miles south of downtown Sioux City, Iowa. Camp Dodge is the state's only military training installation. (Des Moines). Iowa Army Ammunition Plant is a Group Technology Center for missile warheads, tank ammunition, artillery rounds and demolition charges. The plant is a one-of-a-kind national resource that provides "total munitions solutions" for the Defense industrial base, which includes research, development, production, inspection, testing, assembly, packing and demilitarization. The Iowa AAP's 1,500 building facility is built on 19,300 acres in southeast Iowa. As you can see, except for the AAP in Middletown, IA, the state had few targets of value and none of strategic value. Middletown is just west of Burlington, which is on the Mississippi River.

In its 2005 BRAC Recommendations, DOD recommended closing Kansas Army Ammunition Plant (AAP), KS and would relocate 105mm HE, 155mm HE, and Missile Warhead functions to Iowa AAP. In its 2005 BRAC Recommendations, DOD recommended several changes that would ultimately reduce the number of aircraft in Des Moines. DOD also recommended realigning Fairchild AFB, WA. As a result, the 141st Air Refueling Wing's eight KC-135R aircraft would be distributed to the 185th Air Refueling Wing (ANG), Sioux Gateway Airport AGS. You may remember the United Airlines flight 232 that landed/crashed at Sioux Gateway in 1989.

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Fairfield is 212 miles east (93.5 degrees) of Omaha. The remote weather sensors on the guyed circular mast Scotty had erected indicated a wind speed of ~10mph. Twenty-two hours after what they assumed was the time of the attack, e.g., 11:25am on Sunday; radiation began to register on the CD V-717. The time was 9:30am on Monday.

"What about the livestock?"

"Inside of the barn with plenty of food and automatic waterers."

"Did everyone remember to pull their radios?"

"Everyone with more than a CB did."

"Maybe channel 2 lost power."

"Could be, that was about the time the generator kicked in."

"We didn't ever have a chance to discuss what we would do if there was any kind of disaster."

"At this distance from Omaha, we shouldn't get much more than 90R/hr. Direct exposure would cause a temporary decrease in white blood cells, although there are no immediate harmful effects. Two to three years will need to pass before radioactivity levels in this area drop low enough to be considered safe, by US peacetime standards."

“What about wartime standards?”

“The maximum permitted exposure would be 104mR/hr. Under the 7/10 rule, 7 hours after the radiation peaks, it would be at 10% of the peak value. 49 hours after the radiation peaks it would be 1% of the peak value and 343 hours after the peak, 0.1 percent of the value. If we assume 90R/hr max, that’s 9 at 7, 0.9 at 49 and 0.09 or 90mR at 343 hours.”

“Assuming they hit Omaha.”

“Yes. However, they’d probably hit Colorado Springs because of NorthCom and NOR-AD. We’re about 700 miles from Colorado Springs on a heading of east-northeast (73.7 degrees). I think we should get out a spiral binder and keep a record of the hourly radiation level. We could do that at the radio table and could monitor the radio at the same time. Would 4-hour shifts be ok?”

“How many of us have ham licenses, Scott?”

“Probably just the six of us, unless Dawn’s uncles or aunts have them. By the way, everyone is officially on the payroll. That will cover everyone using the business radios.”

“Six people and 4 hour shifts would divide it evenly.”

“Yeah, that’s right. Dave, did you talk to mom and dad before they left to go to Chicago?”

“Dad said that they would be leaving early yesterday morning to come home.”

“I wonder why we haven’t heard from them? By 11:30am they should have been in Iowa and nearly home.”

“We can’t call and see, the phones are out.”

“Scott, they could have gotten caught up in evacuation traffic from Davenport and had to find somewhere to stay. Maybe they left late and the EMP from a nuke killed Dad’s ignition system.”

“It’s less than 300 miles, they could have been home by the time of the attack.”

“They might have stopped for breakfast or something.”

“Well, he does have a basement shelter, maybe they’re at home.”

“What did you say the radiation level would be at 49 hours?”

“900mR.”

“And we have protective suits and gas masks. One of us could go check on them at their house after the 49 hours. I volunteer.”

“Dad knows where the farm is, but he refused to buy a survey meter. Before Don built the shelter, Dad’s plans were to stay in the shelter for 2 weeks. I thought I had him convinced to come here. I’m older, so I’ll go.”

“You know Dad and his saying one thing and doing another.”

“Scott I’ll go to cover your back. We can’t have any more kids anyway.”

“Ok, we’ll go in 49 hours after the radiation peaks. We could be out for just under 3 hours. Don, you’d better get you ALICE gear and weapons around.”

o

Jeannie delivered a beautiful baby boy. Dave and she had John David picked out if she had a boy (Rene Michelle if she had a girl). When they could, they have to get the baby to Jefferson County Hospital to get him checked over. They used a piece of heavy white cord to tie off his umbilical cord and he seemed to have all of his fingers and toes. He wasn’t happy coming into the world and cried a lot starting a chorus of crying kids. Fritz posted himself near Jeannie and her new baby. He had a blanket and food in a spot in the storeroom and a pile of newspaper to use for his business.

Two days after the radiation peaked at 88R, Scott and Don headed to Fairfield. They arrived at Scott’s parent and Scott checked the garage. Their car was home. They entered the house and Scott called out, “DAD! MOM!”

“Down here Scott.”

“Are you ok?”

“We were, but the generator wouldn’t start and your father couldn’t run his oxygen machine. We didn’t have many bottles of oxygen left after the trip to Chicago, so he used the bottled oxygen and set it at 1 liter. He ran out yesterday afternoon. He’s having a heck of a time.”

“Don grab the concentrator and put it in my pickup. Mom what do you need?”

“I brought our prescriptions down here. We get them through AARP and buy 6 months at a time.”

“I know.”

“There are your father’s guns and all of this food.”

“Forget the food. We’ll take the guns so someone doesn’t steal them. Take the pills and get in my pickup. Don, give me a hand with Dad.”

Scott and Don hurriedly loaded the firearms and headed back to the farm. Scott, Sr. didn’t look the best, he had emphysema the doctor attributed to all of the gases given off by his welding. Forced into early retirement, i.e., disability, he’d only stopped working recently. He’d disagreed with the doctor telling him he’d never heard of such a thing as a welder getting emphysema from welding gases. (ALA estimates that 2 million Americans had emphysema in 1998, and cigarette smoking was the primary cause. Exposure to air pollution and irritating fumes and dusts on the job are also thought to be contributing factors of emphysema.)

When they got to the farm and the basement, Scott and Don showered off and removed their suits and gas masks. Scott ran the CD V-715 over his parents and they were clean. He pounded on the blast door until Dave asked who was there.

“Open the door, Dave, Dad is in pretty bad shape.”

“You found them?”

“Dad couldn’t get the generator to start and he ran out of oxygen. Give me a hand.”

“Did you shower down?”

“We’re all clean. Let’s go. Don, bring the oxygen concentrator.”

Norma sat down at a table and someone gave her a cup of coffee. They put Scott Sr. in a bunk and got the concentrator running. Norma dragged a handful of nasal cannulas out of her purse. A writer could write a book on the contents of women’s purses (I won’t). Dave retrieved the guns from the basement and secured the blast door, again.

“How do you feel?”

“Tired. Oh, man, what an experience. What’s that baby crying for?”

“That’s your new grandson, John David.”

“When did she have the baby?”

“While the bombs were falling.”

“Can you believe this crap? We were darned near home when they come blasting over the radio that someone was attacking the country. I tried to fire up the generator when

the lights went out but the darned thing wouldn't start. Pretty fancy place, is this that shelter you were telling me about?"

"Dad, its Don's shelter, Dave and I just helped him out."

"Did you get my guns and ammo? What about the food?"

"We got your guns and left the ammo and food. We'll go back when we can and get the rest."

"I recognize the faces, but I don't think I know everyone's name."

"Dawn's parents, aunts and uncles. When you're feeling better, we'll make introductions."

"I'm going to take a nap."

o

"How's he doing?"

"He's starting to get a little color back and is taking a nap."

"We have a regular hospital ward, it's a shame we aren't better equipped."

"It wouldn't make a lot of sense to have things we didn't know how to use. None of us are trained in any more than simple first aid except Dave. He took a CPR class."

"Who would have thought that we'd ever have to use the shelter for more than a storm shelter?"

"We did. Otherwise what was the point of putting in the air filtration system, radiation detection equipment and storing 46,000-gallons of diesel?"

"I can see that the money was well spent."

"What about your Dad?"

"All we can do is give him his pills and keep him on the oxygen."

"I have a wrist-style blood pressure cuff."

"Do you think we should keep track of his vital signs?"

"Couldn't hurt. When we can get him into Fairfield to the hospital, the more we can tell them, the better."

“We should have gotten an emergency obstetrical kit.”

“I checked at a medical supply company on the web. There’s nothing in one of those that we didn’t already have.”

Thankfully, nobody smoked and the oxygen concentrator wouldn’t be a problem. Once John David got something to eat, he quieted down until he needed a diaper or more to eat. They weren’t short of food and the protection factor afforded by Don’s shelter was probably about 10 to the 6th power. They weren’t near a big city; MZBs shouldn’t be much of a problem, at least at first. If they were missing anything, it may have been a crib for the baby and news from the outside world.

o

“Anything on the radio?”

“A few hams have been talking about the attack. Whoever it was didn’t have many missiles. They only hit a few places, Washington being the most obvious.”

“Where else?”

“I heard New York, Miami, Houston and Chicago. I’m betting LA, San Diego and Seattle took hits, they have people and military.”

“Any discussion of what we did to whoever attacked?”

“One guy said he talked to someone in Cheyenne, Wyoming. They fired off a bunch of missiles.”

“Which way were they headed?”

“Up. North.”

“That could be anyone.”

“My thoughts exactly.”

“What is the radiation level?”

“500mR.”

“We’d better go check the stock.”

“Why don’t we let everyone out for an hour or so? They’re getting restless.”

“Not the kids and not until everyone has taken Potassium Iodate. In the four-year period after Chernobyl, most of the deaths were kids who died from cancer and they were about 4 when the accident happened.”

“Where did you hear that?”

“I read it on the website of the guy we bought the radiation meters and dosimeters from. KIO_3 administered up to 48 hr before ^{131}I exposure can almost completely block thyroid uptake and therefore greatly reduce the thyroid-absorbed dose. However, KIO_3 administration 96 hr or more before ^{131}I exposure has no significant protective effect. In contrast, KIO_3 administration after exposure to radioiodine induces a smaller and rapidly decreasing blockade effect. KIO_3 administration 16 hr or later after ^{131}I exposure will have little effect on thyroid uptake and absorbed dose and therefore little or no protective effect.”

“We have to wait 2 more days then?”

“If we start taking the KIO_3 now, yes. But we could let Scott’s kids out to play for a while.”

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To understand Iowa's susceptibility to disasters, we must understand some of its geographic and demographic properties. Iowa has a total area of approximately 56,276 square miles. The land area is 55,875 square miles while rivers, reservoirs, lakes, and other permanent inland waterways constitute another 406 square miles.

Iowa is bordered on the west by the Missouri River and on the east by the Mississippi River. Iowa's population is approximately 2.9 million. The State has 99 counties and 954 incorporated cities. Des Moines and Cedar Rapids are the only two cities with populations of over 100,000. Des Moines is the largest city in the State with a population of approximately 193,000. However, when considering the metropolitan Des Moines area, the population rises to approximately 500,000.

While manufacturing provides the largest source of personal income, the State is largely agricultural and has more than 92,000 family farms. Iowa ranks third in the nation in agricultural production - behind California and Texas - and ranks first in pork, corn, soybean, and egg production.

Over 231,448 miles of roadway crisscross the State including three major interstates; I-29, I-35, and I-80. Railroads operate approximately 4,276 miles of railway carrying over 189 million pounds of goods and freight and an average of 63,751 passengers, annually. There are eight commercial service airports within the State and an additional 107 general aviation airports. Des Moines has the only international airport within the State.

Four nuclear power plants impact the State. The Duane Arnold Nuclear Power Facility is located near Palo, Iowa. Iowa is also impacted by the Ft. Calhoun Power Station near Ft. Calhoun, Nebraska, the Cooper Nuclear Station near Brownville, Nebraska and the Quad Cities Nuclear Power Station near Cordova, Illinois.

Leading Hazards

Iowa's lead hazards are those associated with severe weather including, heavy rains and flooding, tornadoes and high winds, ice storms, and blizzards and heavy snow. Iowa has also been affected by hazardous materials spills both at fixed facilities and those associated with transportation accidents.

Iowa has experienced 18 major disaster events since 1989, 16 have resulted in a Presidential declaration of major disaster. Not included under a Presidential disaster declaration, but yet a defining incident for the Homeland Security and Emergency Management Division was the crash of United Airlines flight 232 in Sioux City on July 19, 1989. There were 112 fatalities resulting from the crash and 184 survivors. Also, not included is the Terra Chemical plant explosion near Sergeant Bluff, Iowa that resulted in the death of 4 employees and injury to 18 employees and one emergency worker. At the time of the event, the Terra Chemical Plant explosion resulted in the nation's largest chemical release. Over 1,600 tons of liquid ammonia-nitrate was released into open-air containment ponds.

While the United flight 232 crash and the Terra Chemical Plant explosion were significant disasters, perhaps the most defining natural disaster incident in the State of Iowa, at least in recent history, are the Floods of 1993. Flooding resulted in 17 fatalities and more than \$2 billion dollars in damage. Over 10,000 people were evacuated from their homes and 21,000 homes were damaged, many destroyed. During the summer of 1993, it rained at some locations within the state, each day for 130 consecutive days. Some areas of the State flooded more than five times. Agricultural yields dropped by 62%.

o

The attack occurred between Thanksgiving and Christmas and most of Iowa had snow on the ground. During more normal times, they would have simply bundled the kids up and sent them out to play. Now, they had to feed them doses of KIO_3 for 2 days and then limit their amount of time outside. Scott and Don hadn't even considered the KI when they went looking for Scott and Norma. However, they did wear their gas masks and protective covering. Scott had given his mother and dad N-95 face masks, but it was too soon to discover whether or not that made a difference.

MIAMI – Welcome to Florida, the Sunshine State. Please avoid unnecessary arguments with locals. Starting today, they may be more inclined to shoot you – at least that's essentially the message from a national gun-control organization as a Florida law goes into effect empowering people who feel threatened to use force, including firearms, to

protect themselves. Before, if possible, they were supposed to back down or run away. What they don't tell you is that in Iowa, that's been the law for 25 years.

In Iowa:

Reasonable force is that force and no more which a reasonable person, in like circumstances, would judge to be necessary to prevent an injury or loss and can include deadly force if it is reasonable to believe that such force is necessary to avoid injury or risk to one's life or safety or the life or safety of another, or it is reasonable to believe that such force is necessary to resist a like force or threat. Reasonable force, including deadly force, may be used even if an alternative course of action is available if the alternative entails a risk to life or safety, or the life or safety of a third party, or requires one to abandon or retreat from one's dwelling or place of business or employment.

A person is justified in the use of reasonable force when the person reasonably believes that such force is necessary to defend oneself or another from any imminent use of unlawful force.

A person is justified in the use of reasonable force to prevent or terminate criminal interference with the person's possession or other right in property. Nothing in this section authorizes the use of any spring gun or trap which is left unattended and unsupervised and which is placed for the purpose of preventing or terminating criminal interference with the possession of or other right in property.

A person is justified in the use of reasonable force to aid another in the lawful defense of the other person's rights in property or in any public property.

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I suppose if you caught your wife in bed with another guy, you could shoot him and claim that you thought she was being raped and that her screams of joy were screams of anguish. That would work right up until she testified... Just because they're farmers, doesn't mean they're dumb.

You try and run a business where most of your costs and receipts are determined in the marketplace and your biggest enemy is something you have no control over, the weather. A hurricane hits the Gulf Coast and your costs of production soar. They grow soybeans and extract the oil to produce biodiesel. The soybean meal is used to fatten the cattle, hogs and chickens. Soybean meal is going for ~\$180 a ton. In 1969, it reached ~\$400 a ton and you were lucky to get a quarter for your hogs. When you factor in inflation, quarter hogs (25¢ a pound) in 1969 were worth more than hogs today. Gas and diesel were probably about 32¢ a gallon. The average farmer feeds >100 people with the food he produces.

The Family Farm – Chapter 11

“How are the chickens and stock?”

“They were getting short on feed, but seem ok. I gathered eggs.”

“When can we stay in the house?”

“When the radiation level reaches 50mR.”

“It didn’t look any different outside.”

“I know but the radiation level is still too high to stay up there fulltime. It’s there, even if you can’t see it.”

“When are you going to take Scott and the baby to the hospital to get them checked out?”

“There doesn’t seem to be any rush, Scott has his color back and the baby is doing well. Are the kids up on their shots?”

“They’re probably in better shape than we are Don. How long has it been since you had a tetanus shot?”

“Probably not since I was a baby. We all got our flu shots this fall.”

“The shots they give kids these days are far different than what we got when we were kids. Maybe we’d better get immunized against whatever they’re protecting the kids against. Babies need 20 immunizations during the first two years of life. Those include older immunizations such as measles, mumps, and rubella as well as newer vaccines like chickenpox, hepatitis B, and Prevnar, which can prevent infections that cause pneumonia and meningitis.”

“I hate getting shots.”

“And you think nothing of playing with a chainsaw. We don’t really have much in the way of medical supplies. We should pick up Scott Sr.’s oxygen bottles and get them refilled.”

“I’ll have to check and see if they’re going to reopen the store, too.”

“This might be a very good time to make the transition to farming.”

“But, Dawn, you’re not working and TSC supplies the only health insurance we have.”

“Uncle Ralph has a plan for his employees. Why don’t you talk to him and find out about health insurance?”

“Oh right, less than 2 weeks after somebody attacks this country, I’m going shopping for health insurance?”

“You’re not being very practical.”

“Probably because I have no idea what’s going on or where any of us stand. I know that we are ok for the moment, but what about everyone else in Fairfield, Jefferson County and Iowa? What about everyone else in the United States? This darned radio is all but useless.”

“What’s the shouting about?”

“Don is upset because we don’t know what is going on.”

“We’re taking Dad and John David to the hospital next week. Jeannie and I thought that we ought to get all of our immunizations updated. We can start there and we can check with the Jefferson County Emergency Management Agency and see what they can tell us.”

“I hate getting shots.”

◦

“Now I know what a pincushion feels like.”

“Maybe, but we’re protected against most things. Did you notice that they gave us some different immunizations? I wonder what that was all about.”

“They had some oddball illnesses break out after the hurricane, maybe they’re just protecting us against some illnesses they expect to arise. I thought that smallpox was irradiated.”

“It was. Immunity from smallpox vaccination decreases with the passage of time. Past experience indicates that the first dose of the vaccine offers protection from smallpox for three to five years, with decreasing immunity thereafter. If a person is vaccinated again later, immunity lasts longer. A report from Europe suggests that people vaccinated 10 or 20 or more years ago have enough immunity to lessen their chance of death if infected. However, these people need another dose of smallpox vaccine to restore their immunity.”

“Nurse, what were those other vaccinations?”

“By order of the President, we’re vaccinating against smallpox, anthrax, typhoid, yellow fever and rabies. You will need to return next week for additional injections. The rabies vaccine is a series of 3 shots.”

“I hate getting shots.”

“Regardless. At least the government is supplying the vaccines. You’re lucky, some of those vaccines are difficult to obtain and quite expensive.”

“Let’s swing by the store.”

“Ok.”

“Is the store going to reopen?”

“Not for a while. Jefferson EMA advised that non-essential retail outlets would be closed for several weeks. The company will be paying management personnel a small payment so we can buy food and necessities. You’re covered, Don. Is there anything you need from the store?”

“I can’t think of anything at the moment, Howard.”

“You have keys, so if you need anything, take it and leave a note by the cash register. We’ll sort it all out later. Did you get your vaccinations?”

“We just came from the hospital.”

“I really don’t know what’s going on, Don. They’re immunizing against things you usually only have to take if you were going to a foreign country.”

“I asked a nurse, Howard. She said that by order of the President, we were being vaccinated against smallpox, anthrax, typhoid, yellow fever and rabies. We still have to take more shots.”

“Better safe than sorry, I always say.”

o

“They’re giving several new vaccines, I think that all of you have to get to the hospital and get vaccinated right away. This is stuff that we’ve never been vaccinated for before plus boosters on those we have.”

“It’s a bunch of foolishness if you ask me,” Ralph snorted.

“Shut up Ralph and get your coat.”

“But Rose, I hate getting shots.”

“We got ours, but I don’t understand why they’re vaccinating against some of those things.”

“I don’t either Scott. We’re going to have some time to harvest more timber. Howard told me that TSC would remain closed for a while.”

“That will work for me, about the only plumbing business we get in the winter are repairs and my people can handle those. What about you, Dave?”

“I got my shots.”

“No, what about you helping harvest those apple trees?”

“I’m sort of like you; I don’t get many installations during the winter. I’ll have to knock off and do repairs when they get the power back on. I talked to the head of the Jefferson County EMA and he told me that there is a shortage of generators. About the only things open are the grocery stores and the service stations beside government offices.”

“Let’s get the wood Don cut up, split and stacked first. Then we can drop another tree and do the same with it.”

“Has anyone thought to stick the fuel tanks?”

“No, Ben, we haven’t. The generator has mostly been running at minimum power, 25%. There is enough diesel fuel to run it at that level for more than 3 years.”

“Mind if I check?”

“The stick is in the machine shed, go ahead. Dawn we’ll be outside splitting the firewood.”

“Bring me in some kindling when you get the chance.”

“Ok. You know fellas, after we finish splitting the wood, maybe we ought to fell that pine and get more kindling. I don’t have a lot left.”

“That will be a snap. Pines are easier to drop than those old apple trees.”

o

“Are you guys about done? Supper is almost ready.”

“Close enough, Dawn. We can finish in the morning and go after some kindling.”

“I set the kids up on the coffee table and we’ll eat at the dining room table. We brought one of the folding tables up from the shelter so everyone has a place to sit.”

“Tractor Supply and many of the non-essential businesses in Fairfield are closed for a while. Scott, Dave and I are going to harvest as much firewood as we can before we have to get back to work. Does anyone need to take anything from the shelter when they return home?”

“Don we all have freezers and with the power off, our homes are probably like ice. So, while the freezers should be ok, until they get the power back on, I don’t see that many of us can return home. I’d suggest that we move the freezers here and set them up in the machine shed so we can power them and keep them frozen. Nobody is going to be doing much farm work until spring and maybe we ought to just stay here.”

“I can move the things out of my office and we can set up some beds in there.”

“I can do the same for my sewing room, Don.”

“I suppose we could put all of the kids in one room and empty a third bedroom, but that still leaves us short.”

“If I may make a suggestion, why don’t we put the kids in the living room and each of us can take an upstairs bedroom. Since all of the medical equipment is in the shelter, maybe the Douglas families would like to stay there.”

“I think that would mostly be up to the Douglas families.”

“Dad, what do you think?”

“Beats climbing all of those stairs.”

“Mom?”

“Whatever your father says, dear.”

“Dave?”

“Yeah, sure.”

“Don, we’ll take the shelter just as Rose suggested.”

◦

1 Pine and 38 Apple trees later...

“This is almost better than a workout, Don.”

“I never was much into lifting weights just for the fun of it, Dave.”

“Have you lost weight?”

“I still weigh the same but the sands have shifted. I had to go to Fairfield and get new jeans. I only bought a couple of pair because once I get back to work at TSC, I’ll probably shift the sands again.”

“Are you still getting checks?”

“I have for the past 6 weeks, yes. Why do you ask?”

“I ran into Howard and asked him when the store was going to reopen. He told me that he had no idea, but no time soon. He also said that they might have to cut back, whatever that means.”

“What about you?”

“They said the power would be back on next week and I’ll probably have enough work for a while. Scott said that when the power was on in Ottumwa, they were returning home.”

“I’m not going to need to cut firewood for a while, am I?”

“I wouldn’t think so; did you figure out exactly how much we ended up with?”

“134 cords of apple and 2½ cords of pine.”

“Did you ever to get your Dad’s generator to work?”

“He forgot to open the shutoff valve for the gas. It started right up after a few yanks.”

“Do you want some generators for your homes in case we lose power again? I get an employee discount at TSC. We also carry the Generac Guardian Industrial/Commercial Portable Generators with 12.5kW and 15kW ratings. They’re gas, but they have 16 gallon tanks. They have a MSRP of \$2,475 and \$2,715, but we sell them for \$2,296 and \$2,395. You’d have my employee discount on top of that.”

“Scott has a Kohler 30RES Residential Standby and I have an Onan RS15000. Both put out around 125 amps.”

“LP?”

“Right.”

o

If the brothers each had a residential standby generator powered by LP, why were they staying on the farm? Not for want of power, that was apparent to even the most casual observer. Perhaps it had to do with security, perhaps not. Let's face facts; Fairfield, Iowa isn't south central Los Angeles or New Orleans. Although Iowa is a leading producer of ethanol, a blend stock used in gasoline production, the entire state is allowed to use conventional gasoline. The state does not have any indigenous crude oil production or refineries, but several major pipelines traverse the state, including two major natural gas liquid pipelines from Canada. Natural gas accounts for about two-thirds of the home heating fuel market followed by propane with nearly 16 percent. Iowa ranks 5th in the nation for liquefied petroleum gas consumption, mostly due to the heavy use of propane for crop drying during the fall months.

Iowa is a great place to live, if you can handle the heat and humidity in the summer and the cold and humidity in the winter; if you don't happen to own any NFA weapons; and, if you want a good education. If Iowa is such a great place to live, why then is it that Iowa, in common with other Great Plains states, especially Kansas, Nebraska, Oklahoma, North and South Dakota, is feeling the brunt of falling populations. 89% of the total number of cities in those states have fewer than 3,000 people; hundreds have fewer than 1,000. Between 1996 and 2004, almost half a million people, nearly half with college degrees, left the six states. "Rural flight" as it is called has led to offers of free land and tax breaks as enticements to newcomers. 17% of the population of Iowa is Lutheran followed by Methodists at 14%. 86% of the populations are Christians, including 62% Protestant, 23% Roman Catholic and 1% other. The Family Farm is usually now a corporation.

Iowa has a strong emphasis on education, which is shown in standardized testing scores. In 2003, Iowa had the second highest average SAT scores by state, and tied for second highest average ACT scores in states where more than 20% of graduates were tested. The Farm Crisis of the 1980's saw a major decline of family farms in Iowa and around the Midwest, and was marked by a sharp drop in the state's rural population. In the 2004 election, Bush got 746,600 and Kerry got 733,102 votes. Iowa has 1 Republican and 1 Democrat Senator, 4 Republican and 1 Democrat Representatives. Why doesn't your author live there? That's a very good question. Ever hear the expression, he got out of Dodge? 16, 13, 10, 5, 4 and 1, fame is fleeting, at best.

o

"Howard, I hear that the company is cutting back."

"I was going to come by and see you Don, I'm afraid what you heard is true. Even considering your tenure as an hourly employee, I afraid that you'll be cut. I hate it, but my hands are tied. You'll be getting a check for two full weeks and your accumulated vacation. What are you going to do now?"

"I thought I'd try my hand at farming, Howard." (Never let them see you cry!)

“I hope you’ll shop in the store.”

“Sure.”

◦

Don wasn’t the only one, many states were experiencing problems recovering from the attack and the states that had taken warheads had many problems, the radiation seemed to linger. While the airborne fallout had stopped, heavier metals remained radioactive. It wasn’t that the American population hadn’t been warned, they had. Most of those warnings came from people like USS and KI4U, not the government. Even if you had increased your supplies after the storms in the Gulf, seven days of supplies wasn’t enough. Two weeks’ worth of supplies was a bare minimum and you might end up mooching after. If the US couldn’t handle a hurricane, regardless of its size, what could they do when several major cities were attacked?

Manufacturers couldn’t make generators fast enough to meet the demand after Katrina and Rita, what do you believe it would be like now? Kohler was based in Wisconsin; Cummins Power Generation in Minneapolis, Minnesota; and, Generac Power Systems in Waukesha, Wisconsin. Kohler had locations in Wisconsin, Mississippi and Mexico, Onan (CPG) a couple in Minnesota and Generac 4 in Wisconsin and one in Iowa. The engines are built in one place, the alternators in a second and perhaps the generator is assembled in a third.

◦

The Kohler 50REOZJB generator with the 4Q10W alternator was rated at 120/240volts, single phase, 60Hertz, 55/55kW/kVA, 229amps, Standby; and, 50/50kW/kVA, 208amps Prime. A person might ask why Don would have put in such a mammoth generator. If one were thinking about a home, a 15kW generator would have been more than adequate. An Onan RS15000 LP Vapor generator was rated at 120/240volts, single phase, 60Hertz, 16kW, 133amps Standby with no Prime rating. The farm had a 200amp panel for a reason; in the past Ernest had dairy cows and milking machines. There was a welder in the well house. And half of the power was diverted to the house with its 100amp panel. While the house didn’t have central air, it had window air conditioners on both floors. It also had an electric hot water heater and dryer. Mary had used an electric stove. Now the house and the shelter housed the electric stove, 2 refrigerators, 3 freezers, 2 hot water heaters and 2 electric dryers. Under the proper circumstances, they could use at least 200 amps. This was becoming an operating farm. Don was a Methodist; you know how they are, liberal, tolerant and open-minded.

◦

“Howard confirmed it, Dawn, I guess I’m a farmer now whether I want to be or not.”

“Down in the dumps?”

"If I hadn't known going in that it was a possibility, I may have been. What's in the package?"

"I didn't look, Dave dropped it off."

"I'll be damned."

"What is it?"

"Bib overalls and a John Deere cap."

"Right size?"

"It would appear so."

"Go put them on and I'll put on my red dress. We'll go visit Dave and Jeannie. Wear your Navy Sport coat and you can drive your pickup."

o

"Jeannie, Farmer Don is taking The Lady in Red out to dinner. McDonalds?"

"Hardee's."

"Come in, come in. Did you talk to Howard?"

"Yeah, I guess I'm doing the 40 acres and a mule bit."

"Well, it's their loss and don't you think otherwise."

"Keeping busy?"

"Not really, a few minor repairs, but no construction is going to start up this year."

"Why not?"

"The economy is really in the toilet. Those strikes took out several refineries and it's going to be a few years until they're rebuilt. To tell you the truth, Scott isn't much better off than I am. The Legislature is talking about cranking up soybean based biodiesel production to reduce the fuel shortage. You know, Ralph doesn't have as much fuel stored as you do and he's farming 4 times as much land."

"Did they ever say who they thought attacked us?"

"Nothing official. The word is that Wal-Mart is scrambling for new suppliers."

“China?”

“Them and possibly North Korea. Japan took 7 strikes. I’ll wager that was China and North Korea. Russia, the US, the UK, India and Pakistan all were hit.”

“Why haven’t I heard any of this on the news? The TV has been up since the power was restored.”

“I didn’t hear any of that on TV, I monitor the ham bands.”

“What about the French?”

“You mean besides them needing to bathe? Nada. They didn’t get hit.”

“Who did we hit?”

“Apparently China and North Korea. So did Pakistan, India and Russia.”

“I’m sorry, but I don’t understand Dave. What did we have, 15 times as many weapons as China? And, why would China hit Russia? During the first part of last year, China and Russian did joint military maneuvers. Russia sold China naval assets, fighters and 40 Backfire C bombers.”

“I can only report what I’ve heard. What I don’t understand is that vaccination program; the US government being so tight lipped about who attacked us; who we retaliated against; and, what brought about the entire exchange in the first place. Would you like a beer?”

“Sure. How do you like that red dress I got Dawn?”

“That is one nice looking lady you have. The dress makes her really sexy.”

“What are you going to do for work?”

“I don’t know, no one is hiring. So you’re going to be farming. Need a hired hand?”

“I just might. Ralph said he lend me equipment and would take some of the fuel in exchange. Now I see why. He told me to use the NAA to haul wagons and such and said I could use his bigger equipment to plow, disk, plant and cultivate. Something about him having an 8-row corn planter and an 8-row corn head on the combine. Dawn had suggested farming the old fashion way rotating crops and using manure. I don’t really know a lot about that.”

The Family Farm – Chapter 12

“As I understand it, alfalfa and beans add nitrogen to the soil (nitrogen fixing) that corn and oats (nitrogen using) leach out. Ernest or Ralph can probably explain better, but if you use a 2-crop rotation and manure, you would need much less nitrogen. You can spread the manure before you plow and the manure will be incorporated into the soil. Then in the spring, you test the soil and add whatever you need, like lime, potash or nitrogen.”

“Fine you’re hired, if you want a job. Don’t forget to buy some bib overalls and a John Deere cap.”

“It was a joke.”

“I wouldn’t wear a Sports coat unless you’re taking Jeannie out to dinner.”

o

Don walked the fields to see what the tenant had planted the previous year. He had more than enough manure to add to the fields, so he borrowed a spreader from Ralph and spread all 4 fields, the 40 acres of soybeans, corn and alfalfa and the 20 acre oat field. Then he borrowed a large John Deere tractor with a 5-bottom plow. That made short work of the plowing and he used a 637-tandem disk to smooth the land. Finally Dave used a drag to prepare the seedbeds. Don refilled the tractor and returned it with the equipment to Ralph. Ralph, in turn, picked up a load of biodiesel too for fuel to till his land.

Ralph offered to have his hired hands help plant the corn and soybeans and Don and Dave used broadcast seeders to plant the alfalfa and oats. They used 8 row cultivators to weed the corn and beans and walked the beans to cut any corn that came up, a common problem. Dave actually only wore bib overalls on the first day, noting that Don was wearing jeans and a blue work shirt. Ralph had loaned Don a Ford 6000 to do the cultivating. Testing showed that the manure, which included bedding, required an application of potash and a light application of anhydrous.

Ralph kept the John Deere’s for his own cultivation. His crews harvested the corn and soybeans using Don’s fuel. Don pulled the baler with Dave stacking the bales and they managed 3 cuttings of alfalfa, the third being a little disappointing. Dawn used the NAA to pull the wagons of bales to the barn and Ralph’s crews used their hayforks to unload the wagons and put the alfalfa in the barn. When Dawn wasn’t hauling wagons, she, her mom and Mary did the canning. Farming was a family enterprise and Don learned that farmer’s earned their living. He was surprised at the amount of work involved and the limited rewards. Ernest had kept him from making any major mistakes, and they had managed a modest profit, working a lot of 12-hour days.

That was the grain part of the operation, but there is a little bit more to farming than growing corn. One can summarize the grain operation as a series of steps: prepare the seedbed, plant, cultivate and harvest. In addition, you have to swap out equipment, maintain the equipment and clean the equipment when you're done using it. In order to plant seed, you have to select it, order it and buy it. 100 years ago, harvesting was done by hand. Later, they came up with the corn picker, which removed the ears. You stored the ears in your corncrib until you got a fella with a truck-mounted sheller to come to the farm and shell the corn. That gave you a huge pile of corncobs and several wagonloads of shelled corn. You used an elevator to store the shelled corn in the bins in the top of the corncrib and probably burned the cobs in your furnace. Oats and soybeans were harvested with a combine, which replaced the harvester.

The livestock was the other operation on a farm. Before farmers specialized, you usually found a flock of chickens, herds of hogs and cattle. You might or might not find horses. After WW II, about the only people who farmed with horses were the Amish. Way back when, your first tractor was often a John Deere A. Farmers used to have friendly fights with each other over who made the best tractor.

Don farmed and 3-4 days a week, Dave helped. Dawn gathered eggs and butchered the chickens. Over the course of his first full year of farming, Don ended up with a small dairy herd and that meant getting up at 5am and milking, before he put in a full day doing other things. The Creamery bought the milk and the eggs and they had a source of income. Dawn expanded the garden and her mom and Jeannie helped her can. When Scotty didn't have anything better to do, he'd drive over and help too. Which, in the first years after the attack, was frequent.

Iowa hadn't been attacked, directly, and about the only damage to the infrastructure was to the power system. Iowa produced a lot of electricity from coal, generally from Wyoming. The city of Ames burned its garbage to generate power and had since the 1960s. With 2 liquefied natural gas pipelines passing through Iowa, most of the state used natural gas or propane to heat.

o

As a whole, the country was in terrible shape; fuel was in short supply and the economy in the toilet. Having 700 million barrels of oil stored in the ground didn't mean much when you lacked the refineries to process it. Promises were made that the country would rebuild and pundits wanted to know where the money would come from. Foreign investors were shying away from investing money in the US, mostly because of the attack that destroyed nearly 20 major cities. Apparently the oil rich countries felt that they had the US by the throat because they could ship crude or finished product. Canada raised the price on natural gas, incrementally and few noticed. Iowa ranks 5th in the nation for liquefied petroleum gas consumption, mostly due to the heavy use of propane for crop drying during the fall months. Modern farming involved harvesting the corn with a combine and drying it with natural gas, an expensive proposition. After the first year, Ralph offered Don some old farm equipment that still worked but hadn't been used in a

while. He had a pull combine (New Idea), a row crop tractor (Ford) with a mounted 2-row picker and 4-row cultivator (both Ford). Don could have it for the taking.

“We barely broke even last year, Dawn. What do you think about taking that equipment Ralph offered?”

“What hurt us the most was selling the corn right out of the field to someone who had a dryer. Daddy and Uncle Ernest said you should have picked the corn and let the ears dry in the corncrib. It might be a little old fashioned, but with the energy crunch, maybe old fashioned is best.”

“I kept enough soybeans for livestock feed and sold the remainder to the biodiesel processor. They processed them and turned around and sold us the biodiesel for \$1.50 a gallon.”

“You can thank Ralph you got it so cheap. That 961 Ford tractor he offered is a diesel.”

“I know. I’d probably have to rebuild the motor and clean the fuel system.”

“You could put a heater in the machine shed and rebuild it over the winter.”

“Scotty and Dave will be here for supper on Saturday. I’m using a beef roast out of Scotty’s freezer and a pork roast out of Dave’s. Our part will be the homemade bread and the rest of the meal.”

“You’ve barely made a dent in our pile of wood.”

“True, but you should be thinking about another pine for kindling.”

“You couldn’t have gone through 3 cords of kindling, could you?”

“I was trying to think ahead, Don. That’s what you always do, prepare.”

“You have me there. What’s the deal on those new horses?”

“Uncle Ralph said he didn’t have enough stalls, but I think he wanted to give the twins each a horse. They just colts.”

“He could have waited until the kids were a little older.”

“This way, we have to feed them.”

“I’m beginning to see how Ralph accumulated his money.”

o

“Two colts?”

“A gift from Ralph for the kids.”

“Do you think he’d sell us some horses?”

“As long as he could make a profit, I’m sure he would. Where would you keep horses?”

“Here.”

“Oh. By the way, Dawn wants us to drop another pine for more kindling.”

“We can do that next weekend, Scotty, do you want horses too?”

“Don, can you handle a dozen horses? We can pay you to board them.”

“Why the sudden interest in horses, fellas?”

“Don, I think that the country is in a major Recession that could easily turn into another Great Depression. I haven’t had a major plumbing contract since the war. Dave hasn’t done anything except electrical repairs. No one has built a new house or business in over a year in the area. I’ve gotten more work demolishing closed businesses than anything else.”

“Get anything that we could use?”

“I stored most of it, but the only thing I think you could use would be one of those gas pumps. Why don’t we re-plumb one of those tanks and convert it to gas?”

“Have you seen the price of gas? I’ll use the pump, but I don’t think so.”

“Marilyn and I are putting our house on the market and moving to Fairfield. One of the local realtors told me that the bottom was about to fall out of housing.”

“Sell high, buy low?”

“Why not? I’ve pulled the Kohler standby and put it in Dave’s garage. We’re moving the LP tank later this week. We’re looking at that old 3-story house in town that’s for sale. Maybe Dave and you can help me remodel.”

“What does it need?”

“Not a lot. Strip the wallpaper, patch and paint. It’s insulated but I might blow a little more insulation into the attic. It has a coal furnace and with the price of natural gas, that seems to be the way to go.”

“It’s strange, Scott, with all the progress we’ve made over the years to hear you talking about using a coal furnace.”

“You use one.”

“True and if I couldn’t afford coal, I could always burn the apple wood.”

“You two make me think I should pull my furnace and replace it with a coal furnace.”

“Dave, I have one at the shop. Let me know when you want to make the swap.”

“New?”

“It was, in 1940. There’s nothing wrong with it. We replaced the grates and reworked the stoker motor.”

o

“What was that all about?”

“You heard Scott; we might be headed for a Depression. I’d guess that he’s getting the equity out of their house in Ottumwa and converting it to cash. I don’t think he did any more than breakeven this past year in his business. In fact, he may have lost a little money.”

“Oh man, when a plumber doesn’t have a good year, the economy is really bad.”

“There’s that and the fact that Scott, Sr.’s health hasn’t been the best.”

“What’s wrong with him besides his emphysema?”

“Congestive heart failure. It’s a terrible combination, you know. It’s really hard on the lungs and when your lungs are already shot...”

“He’s not that old. Isn’t he about Daddy’s age?”

“Early 50s. In congestive heart failure, the heart begins to fail in its ability to efficiently pump enough blood to meet the needs of the body. Blood and other fluids back up in the lungs and in the lower extremities. This in turn leads to shortness of breath and swelling. As he gets older, the disease will progress. Dave explained it to me.”

“Is that how your father died?”

“He blew a tire and mom and he slammed into a tree. They were killed outright. I was in 1st grade.”

“And your aunt raised you?”

“Aunt Emily, just like the Wizard of Oz. Except my aunt Emily couldn’t make ends meet. Her husband wasn’t very regular paying the alimony and she didn’t make much working in the five and dime. He finally stopped paying altogether. I suppose if she hadn’t taken over raising me, I’d have ended up in an orphanage.”

“Didn’t she get Social Security for you?”

“She called it charity and wouldn’t think of applying. With her being my only living relative, I never got it. I suppose that’s why I hate being in debt so much and have a hard time accepting things from other people.”

“We’re doing ok now.”

“Your family and Scott and Dave made that possible.”

“You know, Don, things have a way of going full circle. They helped you when they could and during the past you, you’ve help them. Most of the food they had was from what they had stored or what was produced here on the family farm. We have managed to keep the supplies up in the shelter, and if push came to shove, we could always fall back on them.”

“Maybe in a pinch, but not unless we absolutely have to.”

o

“How many layers of wallpaper are on these walls?”

“I counted 7 in some rooms and 8 in others.”

“It’s really stuck good, what did they use, super glue?”

“I don’t really know, probably flour and water.”

“How are you going to finish off the walls?”

“Spackle with patching plaster to get them smooth and start over with new wallpaper.”

“I thought you told me you we going to paint.”

“Marilyn changed my mind.”

“Did you get the Kohler generator installed?”

“Dave wired in the automatic transfer and we’re good to go. How are you coming on rebuilding the Ford?”

“I did the sleeves and rings, got the crank checked out and have the heads in. It won’t take more than 20 hours to have it together. Ralph said that the transmission was ok.”

“How old is that tractor?”

“Probably 50 years old. Once I get it worked over, it should be just like new.” (Ford manufactured the 961 from 1958 – 1962. It came in gas, diesel and LP, had a 4-cylinder engine that produced 48.4 PTO horsepower and was my favorite.)

“Are we putting up the wallpaper?”

“Marilyn and Jeannie are doing that and Dawn is going to watch the kids.”

“Don’t forget we still have to cut down that pine.”

“Let’s drop the one in my backyard. I think that it’s more dead than alive. Marilyn wants me to plant lilacs.”

“Business is pretty slow?”

“There isn’t enough business to support as many people as I have. Two of my men offered to buy the business out.”

“What are you going to do?”

“I haven’t decided, but I may take them up on their offer and start over with a single truck like I did the first time.”

“Don’t sell out until I get my coal furnace.”

“I won’t Dave. You made up your mind?”

“Jeannie did, but she doesn’t have to shovel the coal.”

“I have them bring it over the first of the week and get it installed. It will have to be a one day operation; we wouldn’t want your house getting cold.”

“I’ll set up some electric heaters.”

“That’s the last of it, now they can slap on the wallpaper. You don’t want to know what she picked out.”

◦

“Did you hear the news?”

“You mean the stock markets? I told you we were in for a Depression.”

“I put what money we had into gold.”

“When?”

“Right after you were at our house and said you thought we were in for a Depression.”

“I didn’t know you had a lot of spare cash.”

“We had what we made from our first year. It wasn’t a lot, but with the dollar sinking the way it has, I nearly tripled my money.”

“I feel sorry for the guys who bought my plumbing business.”

“Did you carry them?”

“I made them get a bank loan. Are the horses getting used to the move?”

“We haven’t had any trouble. Rather than you paying me to board them, why don’t you help Dave and me out?”

“That’s a very good idea; I’m not doing so well with my one man plumbing operation.”

“The guy with the gun store is going out of business. I was thinking it might be a good time to buy a couple of guns.”

“Liquidation prices?”

“Pretty darned cheap.”

“What were you thinking of buying?”

“I thought maybe I’d get Dawn a Remington 870 combo. The kids will need rifles some day and he has some really good Winchester 9422s at rock bottom prices.”

“What else does he have?”

“He sold those Winchester Commemoratives. He has just about anything you’d want in a Winchester lever action rifle.”

“Does he have any of the model 94 legacy rifles in .45 Colt?”

“About a dozen of them.”

“What did he carry for revolvers?”

“Ruger, Colt and Beretta.”

o

“What did you buy?”

“I bought a pair of 9422s, a pair of Winchester .45 Colt legacies and a pair of Colt SAA revolvers. What did you get?”

“I got each of the kids a 9422, Dawn the Remington 870 combo, 2 Winchester .45 Colt legacies and 2 case hardened original Ruger Vaqueros in .45 Colt, a 5½” for Dawn and a 7½” for me.”

“Dave got the same as I did except he bought the Beretta Stampedes with 5½” barrels.”

“I guess that means we’re going to need to buy cowboy hats.”

“And boots. There is a store in Ottumwa going out of business. They’re having a big liquidation sale too.”

“What do they carry?”

“Western wear; hats, belts, boots and other leather goods like saddles, saddlebags, scabbards, and gun leather.”

“Do you think this is the time to spend the money? We could be in for some very hard times.”

“Don, you do whatever you want. Dave and I are taking our families and going over tonight.”

“I’ll discuss it with Dawn.”

o

“If you think we can spare the money, its ok with me, Don.”

“Scotty and Dave aren’t any better off than we are and they’re going tonight.”

“Keeping up with the Douglas family?”

“I suppose I could carry the revolver in my waistband.”

“Don, I was just giving you a hard time. Marilyn, Jeannie and I already talked about it. I haven’t had a new western cut blouse since we went shopping in Cedar Rapids.”

“Has it been that long?”

“I could wear my red dress and you could dig out the bib overalls and wear them with you Navy Sports coat.”

“I’ll pass. Do you know what brand of jeans they carry?”

“Wranglers and Levis. I think you’d look better in Wranglers.”

“What kind of hats and boots?”

“Resistol and Wrangler hats, felt and straw. They carry Tony Lama boots.”

“You seem to have thought this over, what were you going to get?”

“I thought I’d get a pair of dress boots and a felt hat for me plus I could use more blouses and jeans. You should have a straw hat for every day and a felt hat for dress. You could use 2 pairs of boots, one for work and one for dress. We could get you some Wranglers and western cut shirts, too. You know, they sell gun leather and we should get us each a holster and belt plus scabbards to carry those Winchesters on the horses.”

“I think we’re going to need a bank loan, Dawn.”

“Nonsense, most of the stuff is marked off 75% or more.”

“Marked up and marked down?”

“Marked down, period.”

o

“I still think you look better in bib overalls and the John Deere hat, Don.”

“Call me Tex.”

“Y’all hail from these parts, partner?”

The Family Farm – Chapter 13

“Panhandle. You?”

“El Paso.”

“Quit clowning around and pay the man before he changes his mind and raises the prices, Tex.”

Iowa isn't what one would call cowboy country. There are probably more people in Des Moines that wear cowboy hats than all of the farmers put together. Mostly the only farmers you see with cowboy hats are the people who own horses and they frequently only wear them when they're riding. They may have rifle racks in their pickup windows, but you rarely see them with any firearms in them. The only people who believe that Iowa is the Wild West work at the Essex Hotel on Central Park South in New York City. Of course, it's been 25 years since I came to California. When I lived there, speed got you a ticket. Now people steal anhydrous to make speed. An Ottumwa man also was fined recently for killing a deer with a .30-30 rifle. Rusty X paid a \$140 fine and was assessed \$750 in damages.

An unloaded handgun may be transported in a closed and fastened container or securely wrapped package which is too large to be concealed on a person, or inside a cargo or luggage compartment where the handgun is not readily accessible to any person in the vehicle.

An unloaded rifle or shotgun may be transported if it is taken down or totally contained in a securely fastened case.

Offensive weapons are illegal in Iowa and cannot be owned or carried by the general population. To carry a dangerous weapon concealed on or about your person, a valid permit to carry weapons is required.

Offensive weapons – machine guns, short barreled rifles (less than 16" in length) and shotguns (barrels less than 18" in length or overall length less than 26"), other weapons which fire a projectile and have a barrel $\frac{6}{10}$ th of an inch or greater in diameter, bombs, grenades, mines, poison gas, rockets with more than four ounces of propellant, ballistic knives, exploding shells and similar items. (12-gauge = 0.729")

Dangerous weapons - devices designed primarily for use in inflicting death or injury including, but not limited to, offensive weapons, pistols, revolvers, other firearms, daggers, razors, stilettos, switchblade knives, or any knife with a blade exceeding five inches.

Carrying a rifle open in your rifle rack could cost you the rifle, your pickup and a hefty fine, possibly even jail time.

o

The list obtained by (deleted) exclusive military and intelligence sources, contains:

1. 3,000 automatic rifles. The new supply, most of which is destined for Hamas, gives the organization a total of 10,000 Kalashnikovs, enough for thousands of new recruits.
2. Hundreds of AT-23 Sagger anti-tank missiles.
3. SAM-14 Strela anti-air missiles – quantity unknown.
4. Improved Qassam surface missiles. Their range is 13km or 18km, depending on whether Israeli or Egyptian intelligence evaluations are accepted. The shorter-range can reach Ashkelon, the longer one can menace the southern suburbs of the Ashdod port town, Ashkelon, Kiryat Gath, Kiryat Malachi (where the Israeli President's private home is located), Ofakim, Netivot and prime minister Ariel Sharon's Sycamore Ranch.
5. Land mines of different types – quantity unknown.
6. More than 250 tons of explosives.

In addition, an estimated 500-700 armed and highly trained men have infiltrated Gaza through Sinai to boost the ranks of the Hamas and Jihad Islami. They are believed to include Palestinian terrorists from Lebanon, as well as al Qaeda operatives and fugitives who have been on the run from Egyptian security since the Taba and Sharm al Sheikh bombing attacks. Israel's AMAN suspects that Iranian Revolutionary Guards spies may have been smuggled in with the traffic, their assignment being to establish an Iranian terrorist infrastructure like the one Tehran has set up in Iraq.

Hamas, Jihad Islami and other terrorist groups have emptied out their Sinai arms dumps in the Gaza Strip – an Israeli officer estimated that the tons of explosives, rockets, RPGs and missiles would have kept three large Sinai-Rafah arms tunnels busy around the clock for a year. But on top of that supply, Hamas, Jihad Islami and other Palestinian groups have been on a shopping spree.

Their funding sources are not known for certain, but (deleted) sources can reveal how and where they are getting their lethal merchandise. Iranian and Hezbollah agents – as well as al Qaeda buyers – are using their contacts with local gangs of arms traffickers in Serbia, Slovakia, Montenegro, Croatia and Kosovo, to fill Palestinian stores with new weaponry. The arms are shipped out of ports in Montenegro and Croatia to Yemen and Sudan, thence to Sinai and into the Gaza Strip, unchecked by Egyptians or Palestinian security.

Hamas is already making good use of the huge mountain of weapons rolling in through the uncontrolled Rafah border for its next tactical moves.

A. It has begun stringing out a line of military positions along Gaza's borders with Egypt and Israel, similar to the Hezbollah bases along Lebanon's border with Israel. Hamas operatives have taken over some former IDF positions in the Rafah sector and the former Israeli coastal location of Rafiah Yam.

B. Hamas units have taken up position at the former Morag, Dugit and Elei Sinai and appear to be erecting military installations.

C. The first hole Hamas blew in one of the two Gaza-Egyptian border walls was just the beginning. Since Friday, Sept 16, their bomb squads are taking the walls down section by section, working round the clock. They plant explosive charges and detonate them by remote control. The Palestinian Authority's security personnel and Egyptian border police are turning a blind eye.

Wednesday, Sept. 14, the Egyptians came up with the pretext that not all their troops had been deployed. Two days later, they had another excuse: The resident Egyptian military deputation headed by General Mustafa Bakri has sent orders to Palestinian commanders to put a stop to rampage, but the men further down the line ignore them.

All Mahmoud Abbas could say, Saturday, Sept 17 was that more time was needed to seal the Gaza-Egyptian border - "maybe two or three months..."

Abu Mazen's comment was a verbal shrug – all he could say short of admitting that his men at the border crossing have been supplanted by Hamas.

Since Israel's pullout last Monday, Hamas has held one triumphal parade after another. Crowds of up to 50-70,000 orderly spectators watched heavily armed terrorists strutting up and down as their leaders on the platforms wowed not to rest until the Jewish state was no more.

In dismal contrast, the Palestinian Authority tried to stage a "national" celebration last Monday, Sept. 12. The only people who attended were armed, masked members of the Palestinian terrorist groups in revolt against the Palestinian Authority. Abu Mazen's convoy set out for Gaza from Ramallah, but turned back after he was warned his life would be on the line.

In New York, prime minister Ariel Sharon announced that Israel will withhold its assistance from the Palestinian election next January if Hamas runs without laying down arms. It is far from clear that Israel can make good on this threat. In any case, what arms should Hamas lay down? The old ones? Or the new supply?

A well-informed European security source told (deleted) that the Palestinians are snapping up the huge surpluses of weapons, ammo, missiles, and explosives from the wars in Bosnia, Serbia and Kosovo. This is going on amid Sharon's pledges never to compromise at the expense of national security and invites a hard question: has the politi-

cal-security conception on which he based his disengagement policy collapsed less than a week after the last Israeli soldier left the Gaza Strip?

Israel's defense minister, his deputy, the Shin Bet director and the OC southern command, who were so visible in the course of the pull-out, have all been strangely silent in its menacing aftermath

And, you think the US has problems...

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"Chaw?"

"I don't smoke."

"Neither do I, it's bubble gum."

"Not bad about 2½ cords."

"That should keep her in kindling for a while."

"How do you get white flour from your wheat?"

"We store soft white wheat."

"Maybe I'll take some of your wheat and plant some."

Yes, they grow wheat in Iowa, enough for several loaves of bread. According to a 2003 news report, "Wheat production dropped last year to its lowest since 1972, a casualty of a drought that singed crops across the nation, the Agriculture Department said Friday. Two states, however, were virtually untouched by drought and saw record yields: Iowa and Minnesota. Iowa farms produced 1.96 billion bushels and Minnesota produced 1.05 billion bushels." They also grow Mexican tobacco in Iowa. (Iowa classifies Marijuana as a noxious weed.) And all this time you thought that the farm boys went to Moo U (ISU) and so did the cows (a '60s joke about the girls). They grow hundreds of different crops in Iowa. Most of them are judged at the Iowa State Fair each fall. A person might be surprised at the number of different crops.

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"I like everything we bought Don, but that was a real spending spree we went on in Otumwa."

"I don't know what I hate worse, getting shots or bib overalls. Besides, the price was right."

"I've lived here all of my life and have never figured out why Iowa was so anal when it came to center fire rifles."

"That's easy, Dawn, there used to be at least 4, and sometime more, farms on every section of land. A center fire rifle carries a couple of miles and it wasn't safe. That explains the shotgun only and bow hunting for deer. Did you get any clothes for the kids?"

"At those prices? I just bought some of every size; I'm not into dressing them alike, especially since we have a boy and a girl. If we're going to mostly be wearing jeans, they can too once they're old enough."

"How long is it going to take you guys to get the wallpaper up?"

"Probably a week to 10 days. The most we figure we can do is a room a day."

"We need to do a little work in Scott's basement too. All they have is that outside entrance and he wants to close the space at the bottom of the stairs and put in a door."

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"What are we planting this year?"

"Forty acres of corn, soybeans, alfalfa and twenty acres of wheat. I have enough oats left over from last year to produce livestock feed. I thought perhaps we should take advantage of all of those pails Scott has and store some of the wheat. I suppose we could use the remainder in the livestock feed, if we had to. A bushel is 8 dry gallons, that's a lot of wheat." (There are 268.8 in³ in a dry gallon compared to 231 in³ in a liquid gallon. A 6-gallon pail contains 1,386 in³, ~ $\frac{2}{3}$ of a bushel.)

"That's a lot of wheat to store."

"Less than an acres production."

"Are you planting a hybrid or heirloom seed?"

"Heirloom. We can always use a portion of the wheat to grow more."

"Man, did you see that piece on the news? The unemployment rate is 13%."

"The 3 of us aren't unemployed. Maybe Scotty and you are underemployed in your primary occupations, but the 3 of us can work this farm the old fashioned way and at least we won't go hungry. I meant to ask, how is your dad doing?"

"Not good, Don. There is only so much that they can do with a combo like COPD and congestive heart failure."

“COPD?”

“Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease. It includes emphysema, chronic bronchitis and asthma. You know, I was discussing what happened when the country was attacked. We really had a problem with Jeannie having a baby and finding dad in trouble because he ran out of oxygen. We discussed the possibility of our taking EMT training. It might be a big help if someone got hurt or we had another disaster of some kind.”

“Sounds good to me, but what do you mean another disaster of some kind? The way I see it, moving into another major depression is disaster enough.”

“We can take the EMT training in a relatively short time.”

“Interesting.”

“Mom bought one of those home defibrillators in case dad has another heart attack and we’re going to take the training on using the machine too. All 4 of us are, Scott and Marilyn, Jeannie and me.”

“I’ll admit, we were sorely lacking in that department. But that still won’t give us a doctor if someone really gets hurt.”

“I know, but being an electrician is becoming a lost cause. If I like dealing with the medical stuff, I thought about taking Paramedic training. There are 2 ways to go, Iowa Paramedic and Paramedic Specialist. The courses are taught at the University of Iowa. Their accelerated full-time program allows for completion of training in approximately 32 weeks. Their part-time outreach program would suit those who wish to remain in Iowa to work as Iowa Paramedics, but have limited time and resources to devote to training.”

“Expensive?”

“Five grand for the full course and twenty-seven hundred for the other. They have Pell Grants, Stafford Loans and other financial resources available.”

“Go for it, Dave.”

“First the EMT class so I’ll know if I want to take it further.”

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It meant either commuting to Iowa City or moving. Moving was out of the question as far as Dave and Jeannie were concerned. First the 4 of them took the training on using the home defibrillator. Dave was already certified in CPR and had recently taken the refresher course. Scott and Don also took the CPR course since it wasn’t all that long. Then Jeannie and Dave signed up for the EMT course and got certified. After, they dis-

cussed it and Dave went ahead with the Paramedic Specialist training at the University of Iowa.

Meanwhile, the economy had collapsed even further, if that was possible. Comparing the Great Depression and the current Depression came slowly. First the media discussed a recession and then an extend recession. Finally they caved in and called it what it was... a Depression.

The Great Depression was a massive global economic recession (or “depression”) that ran from 1929 to approximately 1939. It led to numerous bank failures, high unemployment, as well as dramatic drops in Gross Domestic Product, industrial production, stock markets share prices and virtually every other measure of economic growth. It is generally considered to have bottomed out in 1933, but it was not until well after the end of World War II before such indicators as industrial production, share prices and global GDP surpassed their 1929 levels.

What gave this downturn the name the “Great Depression” was that it was by far the largest sustained decline in industrial production and productivity in the century and a half for which economic records have been regularly kept, and the fact that its impact was felt throughout the entire industrialized world and their trading partners in less developed nations.

The term Great Depression can refer to the economic event, but it can also refer to the cultural period, often called simply “The Depression”, and to the political response to the economic events. If it wasn’t bad enough that during the 1930s, the economy was in the toilet, nature turned against Americans too.

In the so-called Dust Bowl, a massive area of the Great Plains consisting mainly of Kansas, Oklahoma, and parts of Texas, people found themselves unable to make a living. On top of the economic crisis, the earth withered and blew away in a series of massive dust storms. For a farming people this was disastrous, and these migrants were led westward by advertisements for work put out by agribusiness in western states such as California. The migrants came to be called Okies, Arkies, and other derogatory names as they flooded the labor supply of the agricultural fields, driving down wages and increasing competition for jobs in areas which couldn't afford it. This story was dramatized in the famous novels *The Grapes of Wrath* and *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck. Life was challenging for those in Southern states also and many migrated north by train to work in auto plants around Detroit.

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Theoretically a recession so bad it was called a depression could never happen again. The problem with theories is that real life doesn't read books. Iowa didn't experience the dust bowl to any great extent. It did, like the remainder of the country, experience the great depression. Side thought – did it ever occur to anyone that the reason the state of

Louisiana lost so much of the tidal plains was because farmers up north began implementing soil conservation? That's what formed the Mississippi Delta in the first place.

Man-made changes to other parts of the Mississippi River have a pronounced effect on the Delta region. Dams, artificial channeling, and land conservation measures have caused a decrease in sediment carried into the delta region, decreasing the rate of buildup of the Delta. At the same time, the rate of loss of the Delta has recently increased past the rate of buildup, causing a net loss of wetlands in the Delta area. The rise of the sea level has also caused increased erosion, as fresh water vegetation previously protecting against erosion died due to the influx of salt water.

That net loss of wetlands in the Delta area eliminated the buffer zone between the Gulf of Mexico and New Orleans. It may be easy to identify the problem, but the solution is a different story. Are farmers expected to stop conservation measures in order to allow the Delta to rebuild? Is it wise to write a blank check to the state of Louisiana for \$40 Billion dollars so they can spend it on everything except hurricane protection? Inquiring minds want to know these things. The correct spelling of Louisiana is C-O-R-R-U-P...

The US has 50 states and 14 Territories. Four states in the US officially designate themselves "commonwealths": Kentucky, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. In these cases, this is merely a name and has no constitutional impact. Louisiana calls itself a state, but unlike the other 49, doesn't really follow English Common Law. There are still remnants of its former status as a possession of France, including: the use of a civil law legal system, based on the Louisiana Civil Code, which is similar to (and often confused with) the Napoleonic Code (like France, and unlike the rest of the United States, which uses a common law legal system derived from England), the term "parishes" being used to describe the state's sub-divisions as opposed to "counties", etc. I have nothing against the people who live in Louisiana, but their politician picker is broken IMHO.

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"How's it going?"

"I'm in over my head; it's been a long time since I was in high school."

"You can do it, Dave, I have every confidence."

"I might be able to complete the training, but unless I actually work as a Paramedic, I won't get the most out of my training and will have to struggle to stay current."

"Johnson County Ambulance Service uses a Paramedic Specialist and an EMT on every ambulance. I'd hate commuting to Iowa City, but that would appear to be my best shot at a job. They have equipment in Iowa City, Coralville, Hills, Solon, West Branch, North Liberty, Swisher, Kalona, Tiffin, Oxford, and Lone Tree. (64, 65, 55, 82, 82, 73,

79, 41, 69, 64 and 57 miles from Fairfield) I think that Kalona would be the closest, it's only 41 miles."

"Go for it. Scott and I can handle the farm. What's the next closest?"

"Lone Tree, 57 miles. I'm going to talk to Scott first, Don."

"Like I said, we can handle it and you'll still get the same share as we do. That's the least than I can do after all that Scott and you have done for me and my family."

Many people were changing careers in the midst of the depression. Commuting from Fairfield to Kalona probably wouldn't have been practical except for the fact that Dave drove a diesel pickup and could burn the \$1.50 a gallon biodiesel. An economic depression is, if nothing else, a character builder. If you didn't appreciate the value of a dollar going in, you did before it was over. Of all the occupations there are, being a farmer might be the best during a depression, at least you eat. However, corporate farmers who depended on large fancy equipment that guzzled fuel and then need more fuel in the form of natural gas to dry their grain, fared poorly. It appeared that doing it the old fashioned way was the best.

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"Would you be interested in buying the farm?"

"Gee, Ernest, I don't know. The times are pretty bad."

"You'll probably never have a better opportunity, Don, land values won't stay down long."

"Why do you want to sell it?"

"Mary and I were thinking about moving to Mesa on a permanent basis instead of the snowbird thing. I'll carry this time."

"What do you want for the land?"

"\$100,000, the same as the house. I realize that that's a bit above the market, but still, once the economy turns around, and it gets back to the value it had when we moved to town, you'll be pretty well off."

"Do I have to decide right now, or can I talk it over with Dawn?"

"We aren't leaving for Arizona for 5 weeks, talk it over."

"Dawn that's probably only a quarter of what the land is really worth. I told Ernest I had to talk it over with you."

"I was born and raised on a farm, you already know my opinion. How long will he give to pay for the land?"

"He said they needed at least \$10,000 a year. That's going to really pinch us."

"What kind of interest?"

"5%, simple, with payment for 15 years at the end of the year and the payment the last year would only be about \$2,100."

"Can we pay \$10,000 a year for 14 years?"

"I'll find a way."

Using traditional farming methods, 100 bushels per acre was good for corn and 30 bushels per acre was good for soybeans. A 1,250 pound steer at 75¢ would generate \$937.50. A 225 pound hog at 50¢ was worth \$112.50. Corn was \$1.75 a bushel, soybeans \$5.00 a bushel, beef at \$1.50 a pound and hogs \$0.50 a pound. Eighty acres of corn was a yield of 8,000 bushels and was worth \$12,000. Eighty acres of soybeans was a yield of about 3,200 bushels and was worth \$12,000. It didn't really matter which you planted. You shouldn't send your son to college to study farming, send him to study economics and computer modeling.

And don't forget the principal variable in farming, the weather. A cow generally produces a single calf per year and a sow about 10-12 pigs twice per year. Complicated, isn't it? How much does a steer and a pig eat? Take a Tylenol and call me in the morning. I wonder if that hotel clerk at The Essex House on Central Park South could hold a candle to a *dumb hick farmer*. Do you know why you don't sell your cattle when it rains? When their back is wet, they won't eat or drink and weigh less than when their back is dry.

For the sake of argument, let's assume you have 30 dairy cows and 30 sows. You're producing milk that you sell to the creamery along with your eggs. You can plant maybe 140 of your 160 acres. That's sounds pretty good, right? Assume you use half of the 100 acres of grain to feed the livestock. In theory, you generate $30 \times \$937.50$ from selling cattle \$28,125, $30 \times 10 \times 2 \times \112.50 from selling hogs \$67,500, \$8,750 from selling grain and the money from the milk and eggs. A \$10,000 annual mortgage payment shouldn't be a problem, right? Let's say each cow produced 1,600 pounds of milk a month for 9 months a year. Wholesale milk is \$1.70/gal = \$20 a hundred weight = $20 \times 16 \times 9 = \$2,880 \times 30 = \$86,400$ for your milk. Forget the eggs. That's a total of \$157,034 a year. Heck in 10 years, you'll be a millionaire. Just as soon as your brown cows start giving chocolate milk you will, but you'll eat.

The Family Farm – Chapter 14

Farmers have a few expenses, seed corn, seed beans, oat seed, alfalfa seed, fertilizer, fuel, supplement animal feed and a vet bill. Plus there are repairs to the machinery, electricity, phone and etc. By comparison, a juggler has it easy and every mistake you make cuts your gross and/or raises your expense. You must be able to make a living at farming or people wouldn't do it. Mostly we hear the horror stories about farmers who went broke. They were the guys with the latest and greatest everything funded by the Production Credit Associations. And a couple of bad years of weather broke them.

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Don't ever believe that the police don't consider the police dogs as one of their own. A paroled armed robber who shot and killed a police dog died in a hail of police gunfire in Long Beach this morning.

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We all have an enemy and the Depression only made it worse. Who are the enemies? Pharmaceutical companies. You can take aspirin or Plavix to thin your blood. The problem is aspirin can give you ulcers, never mind it's cheaper than dirt. Plavix is \$4 a pill, about the price of a year's supply of aspirin. You can take a pill to prevent ulcers, Prevacid or Nexium, also expensive. The other enemy is the oil companies. They keep buying refineries and closing them. There was a discussion in the LA Times about refineries and why there is no relief in sight. They cost 2.5 Billion to build and take 5 years to construct. The Environmentalists are totally opposed to building any more, it might make the air smell bad.

My daughter says that Bush is the enemy, he nominated a woman who has never been a judge to fill Sandra Day O'Connor's seat because she's from Texas. I told her it didn't matter if he nominated Mickey Mouse, the Democrats would oppose the nomination. My daughter is afraid the court might overturn *Roe v. Wade*. I darn well doubt it. The only opposition I have to abortion is using it to select the sex of your child or in lieu birth control. What did you expect from a Methodist?

The Constitution delineates no right to privacy. Such a right is inherent in several of the first 10 Amendments, called by some the Bill of Rights. Justice Brandeis wrote, "the right to be let alone is the most comprehensive of rights and the right most valued by civilized men." He was talking about the right to privacy. The right to privacy is protected by the 14th Amendment, Due Process Clause. We have freedom of speech but aren't permitted to yell 'Fire' in a theater unless there is an actual fire.

Roe v. Wade, 410US113 (1973) was a landmark US Supreme Court case establishing that laws against abortion violate a constitutional right to privacy, overturning all state laws outlawing or restricting abortion. It remains one of the most controversial decisions in Supreme Court history. In *Roe*, the vote was 7-2. In subsequent cases *Roe* was up-

held 5-4. So naturally, my daughter is worried. She figures that this woman will overturn *Roe*. Republican conservatives are worried too, because she's never been a judge. What everyone seems to forget is that once they take the bench, the judges' vote how they want to, not how people perceive they will.

I'm ending this story here, they survived and it was because they were prepared, which is my point in writing these stories.

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